February 1988

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Chronicles

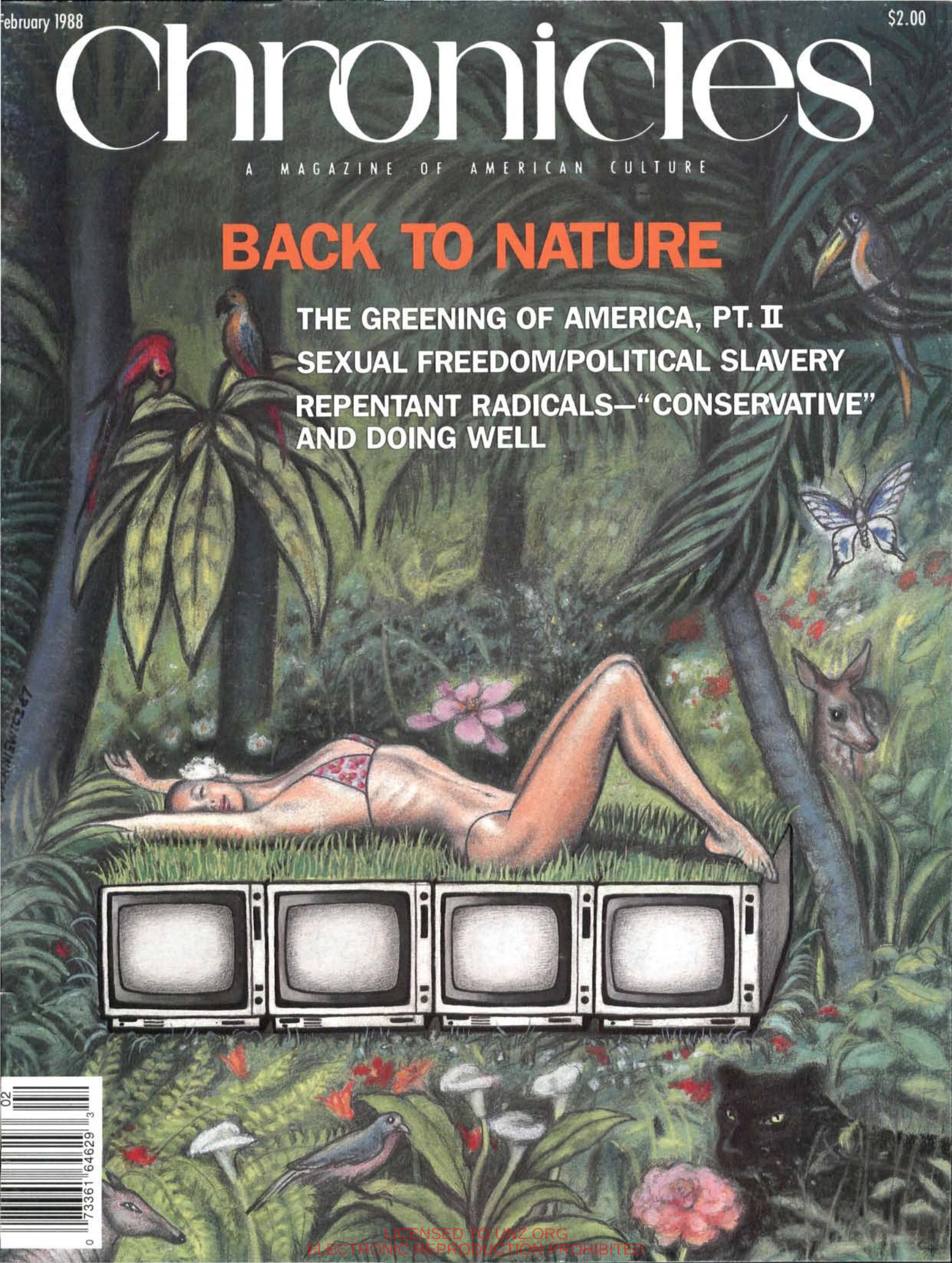
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

BACK TO NATURE

THE GREENING OF AMERICA, PT. II

SEXUAL FREEDOM/POLITICAL SLAVERY

REPENTANT RADICALS—"CONSERVATIVE" AND DOING WELL



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Chronicles
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On the Cover

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Frederick the Great of Prussia once said that heads of state should avoid meeting one another. With all the hyperbole surrounding the Reagan/Gorbachev summit, the three-day meeting aroused almost hysterical expectations, setting up Americans, inevitably, for a fall. Previous summit conferences should have taught us at least that much.

In 1972 President Nixon went to Moscow to sign the SALT I agreement, the ABM Treaty, the "Basic Principles of Relations," and a host of other lesser agreements. The Soviets and Americans agreed to refrain "from efforts to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other, directly or indirectly." That may have been the intent, but in 1972 the U.S. had 1,474 intercontinental missile warheads and the Soviets had 1,547; now we have 2,176, while the Soviets have 6,420.

The Soviets in October of 1973 armed and encouraged the Egyptians in their war with Israel, and U.S. troops went on a high state of worldwide alert. This happened after Nixon and Soviet Secretary Brezhnev exchanged bear hugs in San Clemente in June of 1973 and signed the "Agreement on Prevention of Nuclear War."

After Brezhnev and President Ford met in Vladivostok in November of 1974 to talk of SALT II, the North Vietnamese, aided by the Soviets, made a travesty of the Paris Peace accords and went on a rampage in South Vietnam in April of 1975.

After President Carter and Brezhnev signed the SALT II treaty (June of 1979), the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December of the same year.

Summit meetings and arms control agreements do not, apparently, guarantee better relations. Perhaps they are more important for domestic political needs—winning presidential elections or wiping out Politburo rivals. In any case, the complex relations between two large countries should not appear to depend on whether or not the two leaders and their wives get along well or badly in talking about complicated security agreements.

Even if we sign arms control agreements, we have to ask ourselves if we are controlling the growth of arms. The just-signed INF Agreement would reduce the overall nuclear stockpile by about 4 percent. Nonetheless, since the late 1970's the Soviets have deployed over 1,000 intercontinental ballistic missiles, while we have deployed 10.

Furthermore, while the issue of verification is spoken about at great length, there is little discussion of compliance with previous agreements. The Soviet radar in Krasnoyarsk violated the ABM Treaty; the Soviet deployment of the SS-25 ICBM violated SALT II; and the Soviet encryption of ballistic missile data violated SALT II. Why sign more agreements if the old ones are not complied with?

By itself, arms control involves strategic, intermediate, and tactical nuclear weapons on rockets, submarines, and airplanes as well as artillery shells. It involves chemical and biological weapons, espionage and communications, tanks, artillery, and soldiers. Heads of state cannot weigh snap judgments on the effect of limiting or reducing one aspect of military force. This role could simply be to sign the final documents in their respective capitals while letting lower-level diplomats and specialists under their supervision and authority conduct negotiations and reach preliminary agreements on arms control, trade, and other issues.

Heads of state need not lose face if their representatives have difficulties in these areas, and better agreements can be negotiated without artificial deadlines. U.S. and Soviet leaders might then meet at international gatherings, or perhaps in third countries after treaties are signed and ratified in the U.S. Senate. It seems a peculiarly American trait for our leaders to believe that they could change U.S./Soviet relations if only they could show their counterparts how sincere they were at a summit.

As long as the Soviets understand that the U.S. and its allies are willing and able to defend their beliefs and interests, such an understanding is probably our best guarantee of peace. It would seem that we Americans and our allies need to devote more attention to what we value and less to grasping at signed agreements made in a state of political fever.

—*Michael Warder*

Nuclear disarmament has its good side. Europeans and Americans have been sheltered by the nuclear umbrella so long that they have begun to dream of a world without war. That sort of utopian rubbish is not only demoralizing for the soft, welfare state inhabitants of the Western democracies, but—even worse—it also compels our leaders to engage in public dishonesty whenever the subject of war comes up. How long has it been since we had a *declared* war? How long has it been since a U.S. President spoke openly of the inevitable conflict with the USSR? It is all very well for Margaret Thatcher to speak of the peaceful blessings provided by nuclear weapons: Britain is not a world power, and she does not contribute significantly to maintaining the peace. The United States, on the other hand, must bear the major burden of defending the West. Paradoxically, the nuclear umbrella may act as a decisive incentive to nuclear war, since the condition of our affirmative action armed forces does not permit us to risk a conventional conflict with the Soviets.

It is always a bad sign when great nations invest too heavily into defensive fortification. So long as the Spartans were a world power, they refused even to build walls for their city. The Great Wall of China and the Maginot Line are both symptoms of nations going soft. Like the later Byzantines, who relied so heavily on siege defense

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and Greek fire, Europe and the United States now put their trust in things, rather than in the courage of their men. Once the French and Germans are forced to take charge of their own defense, they may begin to grow up to the realities of international politics in the late 20th century. For too long they have looked to us as a big brother who will fight all their battles for them. Like all kid brothers, they have taken to whining, in recent years. Let us give them what they claim to want: their independence, their equality in a partnership of free nations.

Lavender liberals recently held the National Conference of Openly Lesbian and Gay Elected and Appointed Officials in Minneapolis. Graced by the presence of two delegates from Canada's New Democratic Party and one from the British House of Commons, the conference adopted a resolution (supported by Rev. Jesse Jackson and Senator Paul Simon) calling for further appointments of homosexuals to "posts in the administration" (they already have 70 in the administration of Washington Mayor Marion Barry, 40 in Mario Cuomo's New York). The Movement also wants "financing of a national AIDS policy," action against "violence against homosexuals," and steps to "insure that immigration policy did not discriminate against homosexuals." Heading the list, however, was the demand for an end to discrimination against sexual perverts "even in the armed forces." If their plans materialize, the sodomites may be able to reinstate Sgt. Richard W. Sargeant, the black "medical instructor" who had been dishonorably discharged by the U.S. Army in San Antonio. Pleading guilty to one count of sodomy, two of adultery, and two of "disobeying an officer" (that must have been the clincher), Sergeant Sargeant, "fighting back tears," told the jury, "I wish I could undo all the pain I have caused."

Once upon a time, that *film noir* classic D.O.A. seemed as unlikely a scenario as ever constructed (Edmund O'Brien, dying from a slow-acting toxin slipped to him in a San Francisco nightclub, prowls the West Coast in search of answers, and revenge). But no longer, now that a minor traffic accident might be fatal, if you happened to have received a blood transfusion in Los Angeles, where Joseph Markowski has been arraigned on two counts of murder for selling AIDS-contaminated blood. Engagingly direct—"I know AIDS can kill, but I was so hard up for money I didn't give a damn about other people"—Markowski's financial woes ought to be covered by the financial aid demanded in the Minneapolis resolution. Lucky for him, Markowski has already managed to beat all the charges against him except two counts of poisoning. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Ronald Coen—Angelenos, please take note—could otherwise see nothing illegal in the 29-year-old male prostitute's actions.

The Markowski case comes as no surprise: the morally diseased are always missionaries for their way of life. Drug addicts, homosexuals, and "swingers" want to win the world over to their own perversions, and when you throw in a death sentence, they become even more desperate for converts. Of course, we all know now that homosexuality is not pathological; it's only an alternate life-style, deserving legal protection.

District of Columbia Court of Appeals has just decided that Georgetown University, although a Catholic institution, "must offer equal treatment to homosexual student groups [including financing]" despite its religious freedom to "follow an antihomosexual doctrine." Louis M. Seidman, the professor of law who submitted a friend-of-the-court brief on the behalf of the homosexual students, welcomed the decision as an attempt to "fashion a result that took into account the legitimate concerns both sides have about the issue."

In a sharply critical dissent, Judge Frank Nebeker unmasked the absurdity that underlines such moral evenhandedness: "One might ask whether by our holding a student group dedicated to heterosexual relations with girls under the age of sixteen would likewise derive 'sexual orientation' benefits under the [Human Rights] Act."

Fresh from Moscow, and the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik coup, Gus Hall, the lifetime Secretary of the Communist Party of the U.S., has already conceded the election of 1988. Because of America's "very undemocratic election system" that allows its toiling masses to vote for non-Marxist pretenders, the party will not even put forward a candidate. As an alternative strategy, the CPA, which polled 36,386 votes in 1984, will promote "a broad coalition of the left" (not to be confused with Rev. Jesse Jackson's) to "defeat ultra right candidates."

In the true spirit of international understanding, Soviet author Julian Semyonov is pitching in to help Comrade Hall's campaign. The scowling, "charismatic" Russian has set up an International Association of Crime Writers, perhaps to publicize Soviet successes in literary crime prevention. (They've drastically reduced the incidence of unauthorized speech, publishing out of turn, or emigration to escape censorship.) Though his book, *Tass Is Authorized to Announce*, has not been favorably reviewed even by his bourgeois admirers, Semyonov's Association has already held its first meetings in his private retreat at Yalta—an obvious choice, for sentimental reasons.

Despite a standing ban on Ian Fleming in the USSR, Comrade Semyonov remains a fervent believer in cultural exchange. His efforts have recently received a boost from a 12-year-old poetess, Nika Turbina, a "Russian prodigy" who wants to make the world a nicer place: "Somewhere people are being killed, somewhere children are dying [Afghanistan, maybe?], and with my poems I want to help remove the blocks that currently divide the world."

American PEN and the Authors League of America recently submitted a brief to the U.S. Supreme Court, urging the Justices to confirm the ban on the U.S. government's prerogative to bar known Communists from this country. The Supreme Court concurred and supported a lower court decision which upheld the right of any foreigner to come and stay in the U.S., regardless of his activities against America. The Authors League hopes such a decision will result in "an uninhibited marketplace of ideas," where even shouting "fire" (or "revolution") in a crowded room will be a First Amendment right.

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A TIME TO REAP *by Thomas Fleming*

I do not know what the city-bred recollect of childhood, but one of my earliest memories is of a sunny Easter morning, when I was no more than three or four years old, standing in an unpaved lane that led down to a tiny farm: the bright new grass was pushing through last year's burnt-over stubble; the chickens muttered approvingly about the weather; and—though this seems hardly likely so close to the shore of Lake Superior—a few wild flowers had begun to unfold at the edge of the ditch.

A little later there were the summer days spent on a Swedish farm owned by a deer-hunting friend of my father or the July afternoon I stood boiling from the waist up while the rest of me froze in the Brule River, waiting patiently for the trout that never came. When I think of those days I always see birches on a bluff over an expanse of blue water.

In later years it was the sea, vast and crystalline, that spread before our house in South Carolina, and behind us what Charleston's poet Henry Timrod described as

> A league of desolate marshland, with its lush
> Hot grasses in a noisome tide-left bed,
> And faint warm airs that rustle in the hush
> Like whispers round the body of the dead.

There is no point pretending indifference to such things. Even the hardest man will notice the landscape, and more than a few military veterans devote themselves to a garden in their declining years. As Edward Wilson reminds us, man is instinctively a naturalist, innately a lover of nature, and the more we warp ourselves away from the fields and rivers of our race's childhood, the lonelier we become; the more hours we spend poring over catalogs from L.L. Bean and Abercrombie and Fitch; and the more eagerly we await the

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arrival of the year's first seed catalogs. We may even develop a taste for Wordsworth.

Western Civ teachers frequently tell their students that the Greeks displayed little appreciation for nature. I don't know. It is true that classical Greek poetry does not abound in landscapes and rural scenes; it took the urbanization of the Hellenistic Age to inspire the pastoral poetry of Theocritus. But Socrates was enough of a Romantic to gush over the trees and running brook at the beginning of the *Phaedrus*, and when Odysseus tries to describe a girl's beauty, he draws upon the same simile of a young tree that later inspired Ezra Pound. For the Greeks any tree or spring or mountain glen might be inhabited by a divine spirit, but living as closely as they did with the real world they had no pressing need for descriptive poetry. We are not told that Adam ever composed verse in the Garden. After the fall, he might well have joined the ranks of poets who wrote of paradises lost.

The ancients typically imagined the Golden Age as a garden or at least as a life of rural simplicity. They knew, no one more than Theocritus and Vergil, that the reality of rustic life was harsh and often brutal. It was Vergil who in his poetic farmer's almanac declares: "It is work, miserable work that conquers all"—a parody by anticipation of Ovid's famous testimony to the power of love.

Modern man, who has cut himself off from the facts of life, is still condemned to dream of primitive Edens where men and women live in touch with nature; but with nothing solid on which to anchor our illusions, we must project our tribal memory upon the future. Some day, we shall escape from all this to a James Barrie world of Peter Pans and Admirable Crichtons. Even though "getting and spending we lay waste our powers," there is a better world where no man will have to work to support himself, and even though we devote most of our energies to acquiring and supporting a wife (with attendant children), we can look forward to a Muslim paradise filled with irresponsible pleasures beneath the forest canopy. Our Eden is like the evolutionists' god: It never existed, but with a little luck we shall all get there some day.

Agrarian nostalgia lies behind many of the more exotic social and intellectual movements of the past two centuries. The Romantics and Southern Agrarians come most easily to mind, but a similar back-to-nature impulse drove the early socialists into communes; it also explains more than a little of Marxism's appeal. In the early 20th century, European agrarians were as likely to jump into National Socialist parties as into the Socialist International, but it is precisely at this point that the reactionary right meets the revolutionary left: In opposition to a value-free, industrialized modernization, both hold out visions of a communal and traditional life in touch with nature. Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* and John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* could be read as either radical or reactionary books; however, today no one would call them either liberal or conservative, since in contemporary terms, most conservatives, no less than liberals, devote themselves to a cautious defense of status quo post-Franklin Roosevelt.

All of these elements—the egalitarian itch, the desire for unwashed innocence, and the very natural *libido dominandi*—played a major role in what we jokingly used to call, back in the 60's, "The Revolution." The height of the 60's is now some 20 years distant, and yet it is again the subject of television documentaries and *New Republic* articles in which balding (still long-haired) Marxists and ex-Marxists ask themselves, "Why did we fail?"

By *we* they generally mean the SDS and other loudmouth/softcore revolutionists who barely knew enough to load a shotgun, much less to plant a bomb or knock over a bank. The truth is, hardly anyone on or off the campus ever took the New Left seriously either as a promise or a threat. They were convenient for a liberal establishment that desperately needed the peril of a red menace to unite the country behind. Predictably, most conservatives endorsed the liberal propaganda by backing the Johnson-Kennedy War and supporting the semi-literate progressives who masqueraded as college presidents. If students disrupted Clark Kerr's multiversity at Berkeley, what difference did it make? Campus riots were only a temporary interruption in the orderly manufacture of bureaucrats and ideologues. But, almost inevitably, conservatives continue to take the bait: the soft left's latest gimmick is to stage "second thoughts" conferences at which paunchy SDSers repent publicly and pass the hat. Token conservatives are invited to lend an air of respectability to the Punch-and-Judy proceedings. Well, there's a conservative born every minute, and as a group they seem inexhaustibly willing to embrace anyone with leftist credentials, no matter if he's never had any first, much less second, thoughts.

What began in youth and gladness went bad very quickly somewhere between 1966 and 1968. I saw the difference in San Francisco before and after Love Summer. Even the campus radicals of the mid-60's had not been complete cretins, but filling out the ranks of the Hippies and Yippis were the dropouts failures, and village idiots of every suburban high school in America.

My own experience of student radicalism is somewhat limited, to say the least—a few demonstrations, a strategy session or two, several unpleasant experiences of being caught in the wrong places at the wrong time, but my impressions of those days have been confirmed by a great many other 60's refugees. At Chapel Hill, for example, where SDS was said to have a strong chapter, they were regarded as a small group of out-of-state students with funny names, led by equally out-of-it professors. They were boring, pompous, and as undereducated as the football team—they still are. (As early as the mid-60's Berkeley philosophy professor John Searle was pointing out that campus radicals had actually little in common with campus intellectuals.) As John Lennon so sagely observed, quoting the slogans of Chairman Mao was rarely a good opening line, at least not with any girl not making a career out of ugliness. Early campus Bohemians had lived a life of wine, women, and song, but the New Left contented itself with dope, dogs, and mimeographed propaganda.

Most of the 60's "kids" were simply out for the usual good time. Of those who did take things seriously, a considerable number went off the deep end with music,

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irresponsibility, and drugs. A greater number, the majority at most schools, went to class, got married, and are now doing reasonably well. How well I remember the "riot" that shut down Chapel Hill. We were supposed to go to Washington to protest the war. One New Left type boasted to me that the Revolution had really come this time, because the Jocks and the Frat Rats were in on it now. Well, all the Jocks and Frat Rats I saw came back with a golden tan and a hangover from their weekend at Carolina Beach.

It is not that there was no common vision in the 60's, only that it had little or nothing to do with any of the ranting hysteria we were subjected to by the SDS, Black Panthers, and radical feminists (let's not forget who really won the revolution!). You could look for the 60's vision not in the Port Huron Statement but in the reactionary folk songs (and later rock music) to which everybody listened. In those days the typical singer was a city boy wearing clod-hopper shoes (for all that hard travelin') and a linen smock with a rawhide lace. They were nice suburban white boys who played English ballads, Appalachian fiddle tunes, and always blues—the songs of dispossessed traditional peoples. Their views on technology, tradition, and culture might have been lifted directly from *I'll Take My Stand*. If there had been a real party of the right in America, they would have joined it in a minute and taken with them a large part of the revolting youth.

What began in youth and gladness went bad very quickly, somewhere between 1966 and 1968. I saw the difference in San Francisco before and after Love Summer. Even the campus radicals of the mid-60's had not been complete cretins, but filling out the ranks of the Hippies and Yippies were the dropouts, failures, and village idiots of every suburban high school in America. Demographics alone could explain why everything fell apart. Besides, SDS didn't have enough Communists to go around—most members of the campus left weren't disciplined enough to be trustees in an asylum, much less run a movement (the word revolution is laughable). Even the folk singers lost their way.

I remember well the last time I saw Tom Paxton and Phil Ochs on stage. It must have been about '69 or '70. The occasion was a strike by food service workers. Paxton sang a number of lovely songs he had just recorded, in the ripening baritone of his later years. Ochs went through his usual paces without much energy before disappearing back stage for several minutes. He reappeared dramatically in a gold lamé suit that fit him skintight. He did an entire set of rockabilly and doo-wop numbers: "I don't care what people say, rock and roll is here to stay." The party was clearly over.

The next thing I heard of Phil Ochs was that he had killed himself after a fruitless search for a meaningful revolution in the Third World. Some popular magazine (*Esquire*? *Time*? does it matter?) headlined the story, "He ain't marching any more." They don't even respect their own martyrs. Anyone over 45 today would be tempted to say good riddance to Phil, but someone under 40 is more likely to look for good in all that happened, remembering the friends who went bad, destroying their career chances and even their lives; such a person might even smile, driving down the road on the way to the office, when he hears Roger McGuinn's opening chords on "Turn, Turn, Turn" on the car radio. Ripped off from Scripture by a Communist as one of many anthems for doomed youth, the song held out the promise of peace, of life in tune with the natural currents of the seasons, and of hope—"I swear it's not too late." But it was too late, even before they started.

The kids of the 60's were their parents' children, for good and for ill: intelligent but illiterate—if not downright anti-intellectual, materialistic, and generous, willing to work if the rewards were high and the risks were low. They simply could not afford to drop out of a system that had made them and spoiled them—what would they do without Social Security? They accepted what they had been told about justice, equality, and the American Way; they only wanted to see these impossible dreams realized in everyday life. Born in cities and suburbs, their imaginations were still nourished on pastoral fantasies, and they yearned, as we all yearn, for clean air and water, for the continuity of generations, and for the wilderness in which they believe our salvation lies. What they are going to do about it, now that they are stockbrokers, insurance men, and lawyers is anybody's guess, but the one political topic that can always lure them out of the health club is environmentalism. In 10 years, when they'll be running the country, the kids will be reflecting upon the golden days of their youth in the 60's, and by 1996 the Greens may control at least one house of Congress. To everything there is a season.

REVISIONS

Golden Years

America has produced few important statesmen and still fewer political philosophers. The one outstanding example of both is John C. Calhoun, whose long and distinguished career has been chronicled in the volumes of *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, edited for many years now by Clyde Wilson. Volume XVII (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press), which covers the years 1843-44, is a welcome addition to a series that has become the standard for historical editing in the United States. In this volume we are treated to Orestes Brownson's enthusiastic endorsement of Calhoun for President, Joseph Smith's fire-breathing denunciation of the South Carolinian's limited defense of the Mormon's rights (Calhoun would do nothing to interfere with state governments), and a host of letters from democratic worthies discussing Calhoun's chances. A lucid and forceful introduction puts the reader immediately in a political context that is far removed from our own petty struggles. For all the corruption and place-seeking of American politics in the 1840's, we cannot help being struck by the level of serious discourse on which our ancestors conducted their public business. In comparison, our own national leaders are "Hyperion to a satyr."

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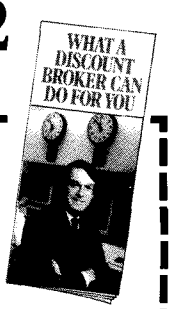

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MUTINY IN PARADISE *by John Chodes*

In December 1787 His Majesty's armed transport *Bounty* crept out of Portsmouth harbor on a clandestine mission, heading for the vast and largely uncharted South Pacific. Tahiti, a tiny pinpoint of land in the Polynesian Islands, was the goal. In October 1788, the *Bounty* dropped anchor in Tahiti's spectacular Matavai Bay. In April 1789, she set out for Jamaica, West Indies, the hold filled with breadfruit trees, to feed the slaves there. The secret objectives had also been achieved. A Tahitian-English dictionary was written. A trade and diplomatic relationship had been established. An aristocratic crewman had married into the royal family, linking England and Tahiti politically. The Tahitian culture and governmental system and its weaknesses had been monitored in Captain William Bligh's log. All this effort was the first step in absorbing and colonizing the Polynesian chain.

On April 27 some of the crew mutinied, led by Master's Mate Fletcher Christian. In September 1792, a handful of the captured mutineers faced a court-martial in Portsmouth. The trial was sensational. The testimony and the whole aura surrounding the *Bounty*'s journey shook British and European society to its core. Did Fletcher Christian revolt because of Bligh's cruel authority, or had Mr. Christian seen Utopia, the living Garden of Eden, and turned against civilization itself? If the first was true, the mutineers should be hanged. If the second, civil society was on trial. The information released about Tahiti's moral climate created a great after-shock. The credibility of the Church was damaged—its age-old power to define human values was weakened and shifted to the King's domain. This strengthened his hold over people's minds as well as their bodies.

Two centuries later, these after-shocks still reverberate and probably affect us more deeply, since contemporary federal education and social service philosophies have been indirectly influenced by the *Bounty*'s journey.

The underlying political and social implications—and not simply the romantic adventure story—is what has created the *Bounty*'s enduring popularity (2,500 books and four major motion pictures).

The Bounty's Tahiti was a sex-and-sun hedonists' paradise. It was a lush volcanic island, with white coral beaches and crystal-clear lagoons. The natives scarcely worked. All they had to do to eat was pick fruit off the trees. To the sailor's delight, the Tahitian women were promiscuous and guiltless about it. This was in stark contrast to the restrained, pious women of 18th-century Europe, where the Church exerted a great influence on morals and values. Before the discovery of Tahiti, Christian piety and the work ethic were largely thought to be the universal standard necessary for society to function. In that respect, this utopian world shocked and fascinated the West. And while Europeans dreamed of throwing off their restrictions to be free, they were unaware that a darker, death-camp side existed in the South sea paradise. Our Uncle Sam may be creating a paradisal concentration camp for us, since our government has used the *Bounty*'s findings to rid us of inhibitions and guilt so we can perfectly fit into the "New Social Order."

Most of this started in 1679. John Locke, in *Two Treatises on Government*, speculated that before civilization, man lived in a perfect "State of Nature." Here he was completely free and did anything he wished without guilt because the restrictive rules of society did not exist. Locke's State of Nature paralleled the innocence of the biblical Garden of Eden.

Then, in 1754, Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* pushed Locke's thesis much further. Rousseau proclaimed that all of mankind's problems were caused by

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society's strict rules of personal and sexual conduct which generated the violence and immorality they were supposed to curb. Rousseau, like Locke, said that in the long gone past, man was most perfect. He ate and fornicated by whim. There was no guilt, competition, or territorial disputes because morality, wealth, and property did not exist. But as civilization advanced, man degenerated. The *Discourse* was a tale with a hidden meaning. Rousseau implied that a dictatorship was needed to strip contemporary man of his wealth and property and to absorb the Church, to stop the propagation of ideas that kept men believing in morality and family attachments, which kept him imperfect.

The *Discourse* created a sensation. Many Royalist intellectuals asked, "Does such a perfect society exist? Some far-off people, untouched by civilization, that would prove the theory?" If so, nationalizing wealth and the Church would be justified. The search for the "Noble Savage" became an important aspect of national policy for Absolutist countries, to promote the power of rulers. To an extent, anthropology arose in response to that search; shortly after the *Discourse* was published, that paradise was discovered!

It was 1768. Great Britain was on the verge of losing her American colonies. So King George III focused on the Pacific for new possessions. He sent James Cook on a clandestine mission in an innocent looking coal freighter, *The Endeavor*. Supposedly this was a scientific journey to observe an eclipse of the sun. In reality, it had a political purpose: to chart the Pacific for secret Navy bases, to discover new lands, to make diplomatic contacts, and collect data about the various people's social and political structures for future colonization. One of Cook's stops was at the just-discovered island of Tahiti.

But the French, having just lost their possessions in Canada, learned of Cook's objectives. They rushed Louis de Bougainville into the Pacific on the same kind of colonizing mission. He beat Cook to Tahiti by a few months. After further long and exhausting wanderings through that vast ocean, both navigators returned home, where they reported on Tahiti's Eden-like hedonistic culture. Cook's journals became *Voyages*, Bougainville's: *Description of a Voyage Around the World*. Both books became best-sellers.

Bougainville literally believed he had found Rousseau's State of Nature, and the *Description* popularized Rousseau's ideas.

Then war with the Americans came to Britain, and Pacific exploration stopped. When the colonies freed themselves, the British need to absorb the Polynesian area was far more urgent. By then James Cook was dead, killed by the natives in a fierce battle on a Hawaiian (Sandwich Island) beach. His second-in-command, William Bligh, was put in charge of another secret operation to continue the process. The objectives were sketched in at the beginning of this essay: creating the dictionary and the taking of breadfruit to strengthen diplomatic and trading ties.

The mutiny and later the drama of the highly publicized trial brought home to Britons the Tahitian Utopia more vividly than Cook or Bougainville had. Major questions were raised. Fletcher Christian was an aristocrat. Did his defection represent a weakening of the class system? Did his disappearance to a place unknown mean he was going to create his own pagan utopia? Had the long stay in Tahiti undermined the morals of the entire *Bounty* crew so that they might contaminate society-at-large? Hanging three of the mutineers was a symbolic gesture by the Admiralty that society stood firm. But did it?

Within a generation Socialist philosophy rose up, emphasizing Rousseau's vision of the evils of materialism, property, and "bourgeois morality." Soon the world drifted toward Marx's Socialist Eden, and wherever it touched, the Church and all competing value systems were absorbed by The State. Later, Freud emerged, echoing Marx and Rousseau's blame of man's torment on civilization's moral inhibitions. Freud also proclaimed the liberation of sexual repressions would set mankind free. When young anthropologist Margaret Mead went to Samoa (near Tahiti) to prove her mentor's thesis that culture, not heredity, determines human character, she also echoed Rousseau's faith that man can be perfect if the State would only free him from inhibitions and "things." (Cook and Bougainville stopped at Samoa and observed hedonism there, too.) Mead uncovered social patterns the early explorers missed: androgynous bisexuality, a lack of interest in the family, a commune structure to take up the slack. She advocated all this to undo the "evils" of Western monogamy and possessiveness. Her *Coming of Age in Samoa* was the mid-20th century's answer to *Description of a Voyage Around the World*.

Margaret Mead's ideas suddenly seemed to ring true. Everywhere governments accepted their obligation to make man perfect by replacing religion's role of defining values. The method? The vast social bureaucracy and the school systems. Children are malleable. They must be weaned from their inhibited parents' values. First, "Progressivism," John Dewey's philosophy of cooperation, sexual equality, and "spirit" over materialism, became the federal education standard. These views were directly at odds with the free enterprise, individuality of the sexes, and upward mobility mores that permeated American culture. (After half a century, critics wonder whether Progressivism has brought us closer to Utopia or abject docility.)

Mead's brand of anthropology (based on Franz Boas' vision) pursued a similar logic. Continually focusing on primitive societies to discover paradise-on-earth, it sought to prove that other illiterate, superstitious, homicidal, cannibalistic and particularly sexually inverted cultures were just as valid as ours. This was another way to demonstrate that America's competitive, opposite-sexes society was just one more variety of man's infinite mutability and was no more significant. This view denied there was any connection between Americans' values and their freedom.

As a result, sociologists, psychologists, lawyers, and the courts have focused their attention on "what is gender." The results have influenced our national law, so that today equality means court-ordered neutering of the sexes, both in the work place and in interpersonal relations. Androgyny has replaced individuality.

These laws have made it necessary to integrate sex education into school curriculum. This is less concerned with fornication than with explaining equal rights law supposed to end sexism. Interpreted into androgyny, equal rights became interchangeable sex roles—masculine and feminine are reactionary ideas that must be replaced by

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nondominating, nurturing fathers and bread-winning mothers. Gay and straight are the same—simply "preferences." All this is straightforward Progressivism elevated to a religion and is a variation of the world that Margaret Mead saw in Samoa. But even she was forced to admit: "Androgyny makes sex an end in itself and makes for shallow relations."

The results have been predictable. Inhibitions are disappearing. And so are man-woman relations and the nuclear family. The 50 percent divorce rate expresses this, as the vast federal bureaucracy becomes steadily more entangled in personal problems via divorce courts, child custody battles, alimony payments, child care and welfare for dependent children of single parents. Legal rules and subsidies have replaced human values. Many children have come to believe their social worker is a parent.

If Rousseau, Margaret Mead, and the federal bureaucracy are right, paradise should be right around the corner. But there is a fly in the ointment. The early Polynesian explorers described the direct connection between paradise and the hell that was also there. Tahiti's darker side included random human sacrifice, systematic infanticide, special diets to make the people so passive that they would accept death without a struggle.

It seems that the randomly erotic and random cruelty were conceived by the rulers to keep their subjects slaves, since morality is a metaphor for individual power and freedom as an outcome of personal responsibility. If so, then we too are headed for submission, since Polynesian values are becoming ours.

Peter Heywood was a *Bounty* crewman. He kept a diary. In fact, Heywood was the aristocrat assigned to create the Tahitian-English dictionary. He married into the royal Tahitian family. He observed that only the common people were hedonists: "Virtue (virginity) was as highly prized among them (the upper class ladies) as [among] our own women at home. And to form an opinion of the ladies of Tahiti from the women who visited the ship would be like judging the virtue of an English woman from a study of nymphs (prostitutes) at Spithead. . . . Chaperones guarded the aristocratic girls."

There were two value systems for the two classes. In fact, the two classes were two different races. The commoners were short and dark. The rulers were tall and light-skinned, with blue eyes like Europeans. Bougainville confirmed this: "Tahiti is composed of two different races, one being serville." Bougainville clearly saw the connection between hedonism and servility. "What the common people feel, they have never been taught to disguise or suppress. They do not think. Since they only live in the moment, they are affected by each changing hour." This made them easy to control.

Captain Cook noted the commoner's servility in another way. Periodically "the men stay indoors a month or two. They eat nothing but breadfruit and vegetables. This produces a sensible coolness in them. Nothing bothers them. Not even death. This implies vapidness, not acceptance. Such a disposition leads them to direct all their aims only to what gives pleasure and ease . . . only the aristocracy eats meat."

This sounds similar to recent federally mandated developments in the field of nutrition. On the advice of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, both the Department of Agriculture and HEW have actively promoted the severe restriction of animal fats—namely red meat, an aggressive food—as a way to reduce cholesterol. Chicken and fish, less dynamic proteins, which can produce a "sensible coolness," have been elevated to the highest official position. Yet the American Heart Association's original research showed such restrictions to be dangerous for healthy people and were only advisable for "high risk" groups.

The connection between nutrition and power was observed by Bougainville. At first he thought that sexual equality had created an egalitarian society. Margaret Mead has the same view of Samoa. But she never, by her own admission, studied their political system in depth. Only Bougainville saw the truth: "At first we took the Tahitians to be almost equal in rank among themselves, or at least enjoying a liberty. I was mistaken. The distinction of ranks is very great in Tahiti. And the disproportion is very tyrannical. The kings and grandees have the power of life-and-death over The People, who the chief calls 'vile-men.' Human sacrifices are taken from this class. Flesh and fish are reserved for the tables of the great. The commonality eat fruit and vegetables."

Peter Heywood wrote about the Tahitian practice of human sacrifice as a way to diffuse political opposition: "Human sacrifice was practiced on the altar of Oro, the god of war. The victim was taken unaware and killed by a sudden blow from behind. The victim was without exception a man who, in the opinion of the chiefs, deserved death for the public good. In a land where courts and judges were unknown, the prospects of being sacrificed restrained many men from anti-social acts."

Bougainville hinted that one form of sex was a metaphor for human sacrifice. His sailors were given a girl for the evening. The girl did not do this willingly, but was forced to perform the act as a humiliating public ceremony. "The hut was immediately filled with a crowd of men and women, who made a circle around the guest and the victim of hospitality. The ground was spread with leaves and flowers and the musicians sang a hymnal song to the tune of their

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*:

Who's in Charge?

"The 'impassioned mob' that the constitutionalists so feared is now the politicians themselves, their impassioned special interests, and their journalists hiding behind a mask of objectivity. Indeed, since most of the politicians are themselves lawyers who reject our whole constitutional idea of law and judicial decision-making, they have become a rabid countercultural faction attacking the very foundation of our legal institutions and ideas."

—from "The Supreme Court Is Too Important to Be Left to the Politicians" by Jack D. Douglas

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flutes. Here Venus is the goddess of hospitality, and her worship does not admit to any mysteries. Every tribute to her is a feast for the nation."

The lives of the Tahitians were filled with various forms of human sacrifice. Heywood: "Infanticide was considered by the Indians as a praise-worthy act of self-sacrifice." Captain Bligh asked a district chief about this custom: "The chief said it was to prevent an over-population. They have too many children and too many men, was the constant excuse. Yet it does not appear that they are apprehensive of too great an increase in the lower class of people. The most remarkable instance related to me of the barbarity of this institution was of Teppahoo, who was a district chief, and his wife, Tetteehowdeeah, who is considered a person of the first consequence. They had eight children, every one of which was destroyed as soon as born. That any human beings were ever so devoid of natural affection, as not to wish to preserve alive one of so many children, is not credible. It is more reasonable to conclude that the death of these infants was not an act of choice in these parents, but that they were sacrificed in compliance with some barbarous superstition, with which we are unacquainted."

If there is a connection between morality and conceiving power, the Tahitian ruling class denied that insight to the commoners via enforced eroticism. This diffused their minds and souls into indifference. Thus the people could not escape from the bottom rung. Margaret Mead faintly grasped this process: "Death and sex are openly observed but the intricacies of social life are a closed book to the young." Yet, like Freud, she saw this as positive, believing that a child's exposure to death and sex would make them unneurotic and that the Samoan's deemphasis of the nuclear family "eliminated undesirable emotional sets." But, in fact, all it did was destroy their emotions. Mead: "A couple who spent their wedding night being observed by ten other people will not be flustered, but will shrink in shame at touching hands in public."

Captain Bligh: "Tinah, the district chief, took me to the place where we found a number of women, one of whom was the mother of a young female child that lay dead. On seeing us, their mourning not only immediately ceased, but to my astonishment, they all burst into an immoderate laughter and while we remained, appeared much diverted with our visit. I told Tinah the woman had no sorrow for her child, otherwise her grief would not have so easily subsided."

In Samoa, only people of rank had nuclear families as in the West. And only their children knew the social structure and ceremonies. Mead: "The non-nuclear family of the lower orders did not provide personal motivation or responsibilities."

Is all this what we really want for ourselves?

REVISIONS

Garden of Edicts

Chernobyl, as Charles E. Ziegler writes in his *Environmental Policy of the USSR* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press) "is a prime example of Soviet technological hubris." In his survey of Soviet environmental (mis)management, Ziegler, a political scientist, attempts to define the underpinnings of this "hubris." Unfortunately, the sheer extent of the Soviet disaster ends up obscured by politicology. Marxist theory, Soviet law, Philippe C. Schmitter's "corporatism," even "Soviet-American cooperation on environmental protection" mesh together to mute what Bulgakov, Aksyonov, or Voinovich have said with great power. Short of traveling to the USSR, discourses such as Ziegler's make it very hard for anyone to understand the junkyard grime, seediness, soot, and mud of Soviet "reality."

In their attempt to improve upon Creation, the Soviet "corporatist bureaucracy" have silted up rivers, built countless Zeks into useless Arctic canals, or slapped together shoebox cities for uprooted peasant masses. Areas the size of England have been eroded, deforested, or merely poisoned, with billions of tons of mercury, lead, PCB, sulfur, carbon monoxide, or radioactive isotopes. Ever reverent, the Soviets never doubt that Science will find a way to clean up its own mess.

Disregarding huge slag heaps of paleolithic flint, today's Prometheuses seem to forget the bond between production and waste. In "Real Socialism" the influence of Rousseau and Marx prevails, and, as Ziegler observes, "Soviet thinking relies on the concept that good government and good laws can mold people into ideal citizens." Sadly enough, in making a fetish of technology, the Soviets are merely magnifying all the moles and blemishes of our own attitudes.

It is "by no accident" that only Soviet writers and artists have raised a voice against suicidal "progress" —Oleg Volkov and Mikhail Sholokhov, among others, have inched away from the party line by opposing the destruction of Lake Baikal and the Don River. It is true that in the USSR even dissent works for the system, by providing the rulers with bargaining chips in their dealings with the West, but Sholokhov, the one-time Cossack, did stand up for Father Don. Like many other "engineers of human souls" in the Communist East, he spoke of what no scientists could quantify—the green banks of his river, morning sunlight in the birches, and the living clams in the shallows.

Sholokhov is dead, while the Don and the Baikal are dying. For all the Soviets' pious criticism of Western technocracy, parts of Ukraine and the Urals are radioactive. Appeals to reason, as our own socialist Upton Sinclair knew so well, never hit as hard as a direct blow to the gut—neither statistics nor graphs will ever influence those to whom a slate-colored river is just so much polluted water under the bridge. (MS)

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TECHNOLOGY AND THE ETHICAL IMPERATIVE *by Thomas Molnar*

There is a very interesting article by Professor David Levy in the February 1987 *The World & I*, which deserves a further meditation on the issue it raises. Two thinkers provide Levy with his point of speculative take-off: Arnold Gehlen (*Man in the Age of Technology*) and Hans Jonas (*The Imperative of Responsibility*). Their fundamental thesis, that Levy (a professor at the Middlesex Polytechnic in London) makes his own, is that modern technology has become something else and something more than the main formative influence of a new civilization—mankind faces technology as it once faced nature itself, that is, as an overwhelming power against which protection must be sought. What the 19th century called "progress," linked to great expectations, we have come to experience as a frightening presence and a dehumanized perspective. The difference is even more important: Nature is not man's creation; it used to stand in awesome magnitude that was imperative to reduce to manageability. Technology *is* a human product; it grew out of the enthusiastic effort to domesticate nature. Now that the task is to a large extent accomplished, and since we cannot go into reverse according to the modern industrial ethos, the new task, according to Jonas and Levy, is to find lessons "in archaic conceptions of world order and man's place within it." These lessons would be more "salutary than [those offered by] the still potent legacy of Enlightenment optimism." With Hans Jonas, the author opts for a "heuristic of fear" and an "ethic of cosmic responsibility," whose consequence he expects to be the realization that we, human societies, have become as responsible for nature's integrity as we have been for the integrity of our cultural institutions.

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An admirable discovery, diagnosis, and proposal. The reasoning is a part of a great current of "reactionary" speculation by a line of authors who had dedicated themselves to the critique of modern mechanization: Bergson, Ortega, W. Weidlé, Sedlmayr, Guenon, Ellul, and, why not, Heidegger. These men have investigated the phenomenon of dehumanization and mechanization in philosophy, science, art, literature, and social institutions, and they constitute a sturdy group of opponents to our mindless enthusiasm as *Zauberlehrlinge*. The last reference suggests, by the way, that the "heuristics of fear" has roots in the perhaps overmaligned 18th century, of not only the Enlightenment but also of G. Vico, Rousseau, and Goethe. All three displayed an early sensitivity to what was to become the modern devastation.

It seems to me, however, that the call for a salutary fear and an ethics of responsibility is rather ineffective. It may also be an oversimplification to hold that technology presents us with the core of a new civilization, challenging us simply with its own problems in need of definition and human decisions. As Gehlen realistically says, men know today that "they cannot count on an internal constraint upon the use of [the now available technical] power, since the tendency for two hundred years has been exactly to remove such constraints . . . in favor of efficiency." Thus for Levy and Jonas to expect hubris-drenched modern man to fear and denounce technology and feel responsible for the wasteland he has created is naive. By force of habit, of daily, hourly persuasion, and sophisticated indoctrination, we have reached a point where we do not sense the configuration of the milieu. Technology for us is represented by machines which do a job, from dishwashers and video cassettes to jet planes and heart transplants; we are conditioned not even to notice the further uses and misuses of technology, such as surrogate motherhood or federal monitors stationed in bathrooms to detect drugs in the employees' urine. We are saturated with technology and its effects: the destruction of ozone in the atmosphere and the repainting, in vivid poster colors, of Michelangelo's surfaces in the so-called restoration of the Sistine Chapel.

We were born in the midst of technology as previous generations had been born among gardens, dusty country roads, and towns surrounded by walls. In spite of sporadic awakening to ecological preoccupations, it is unrealistic to trust the consciousness, as Jonas has it, of "man's obligation to nature," to moderate the horrors being perpetrated daily. For one thing, every mutation of the pre-machine age—

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sedentarization, agriculture, bronze or iron production, city-building—existed under the sponsorship of divinities who fulfilled two essentially civilizational functions: they offered their followers meaning of and justification for what gods and men were doing, thereby calling for myths, rituals, and art forms. The second function was to set limits the given technical instruments could not transcend—unless the gods themselves changed, which meant another civilization.

The novelty we pay insufficient attention to is that our technological civilization so alienates man from his normal state (above nature, below the divine) that, for the first time in history, he has discarded gods, myth, ritual, symbols, and art and engaged in pure devastation, following the logic of a rationalistic calculus. The more robot-like man becomes, the greater the alienation and the more distant the prospect of rediscovering the divine gifts: meaning and limits. The previous civilizational forms were linked to the way of life of nomads, settled peasants, town builders, artisans and merchants, tribal raiders, or priestly castes. All had sufficient ideological space, that is gods with their guidance and interdicts, to allow for the play of ideas, and therefore to evolve from one form and style to another. Their heroes, sages, and societies engaged in new projects and adventures. True, mankind always felt apprehensive about the unknown, the "terror of history" (Mircea Eliade), but this danger could be conjured away by the periodic rerooting of society in the ground of permanence. The immense multiplicity of historical forms and cultures was counterbalanced by belief in a stable power outside and above, whose mundane agent was the moral conscience.

The Age of Technology, this exclusively man-created monster (its earlier icons too were monstrous figures, the Golem and Frankenstein), is the first civilization acknowledging no partial solutions, no limited forms, no respect for maturation, unforeseen change, thus *a fortiori* no meaning and no gods. It claims to be universal, lasting forever (except that it grows irreversibly like cancer), not linked to class, historical period, or spiritual insight. It is an armored Goliath, allowing no civilizational space for self-criticism or self-transformation. Rather, the mania that motivates it, the Pascalian *esprit de géométrie* in its fully unleashed passion, divides the technological space, now our only *Lebensraum*, into clear-cut segments, each of them isolating us from one another, from imagination, personhood, and history. In concrete terms, every aspect of existence is regimented, always in the name of scientifically documented, thus absolutely intolerant, rule. Prometheus was able to rebel against Zeus and thus become a popular hero; modern citizens of technological societies cannot rebel against the Surgeon General, the Kinsey Report, or Soviet atheist law without being declared unscientific and ipso facto insane.

It is therefore not surprising that David Levy sees our future as running an unprecedented risk. Strangely, however, though facing this danger of an altogether new magnitude, this qualitative leap toward robotization, he recommends the "application of common sense and educated citizenry." Is it not evident that our eventual master-teachers in common sense would be unqualified for the task, since they would be, *are*, recruited among the technocrats themselves, renamed for the purpose engineers of the psyche or therapists of fear. It is the first time in the annals of humanity that no spiritual leader would come forward to turn us around (*metanoia*) because spirituality is itself inventoried by the *esprit de géométrie* as a neatly segmented space for special cases.

In short, in a technological world there is no room for an ethics other than an ethics of technology. This is not the consequence of ill-will or of anybody's act of decision. A civilization consists of myriads of microscopic acts, interpreted according to a network of significations, themselves invisibly pulled together by some master-concepts. The mechanization of man is the master-concept presiding over our forms of existence, and mechanization itself is the product of science. (The search for more compact master-concepts which rule us could be pursued with a relative ease, but it falls outside the limits of this essay.) Thus all that our age is able to produce is an ethics of technology which is not a moral reflection *about* technology but a method of finding ways to adjust to it. The truth is, one cannot harness technology without demoting science as a master-concept.

Prometheus was able to rebel against Zeus and thus become a popular hero; modern citizens of technological societies cannot rebel against the Surgeon General, the Kinsey Report, or Soviet atheist law without being declared unscientific and ipso facto insane.

Today this seems like a totally unrealistic proposition since our words and concepts are shaped by accepted meanings and future expectations, all of them at present geometrical and mechanical. The demotion of science is literally inconceivable, which means that it cannot be conceptualized, at least in Western discourse. Our words are charged with meanings which exclude such an expression as "the dismantling of technological civilization." Nevertheless, concepts end up by regrouping themselves behind new imperatives, in the case the saving of nature and of human nature. In this perspective, Hans Jonas is right: "We must educate our soul to a willingness to let itself be effected by the mere thought of possible fortunes and calamities of future generations." Jonas is wrong, however, when he continues: " . . . so that the projections of futurology will not remain food for idle curiosity or equally idle pessimism." "The ethics of cosmic responsibility," the principles of which Jonas tries to formulate, is itself marked by technological hubris; it does not go beyond signs on space ships: "Do not litter up the galaxies!"

Futurology, as opposed to expectation or hope, is itself a product of machine civilization, an illegitimate projection of the mechanical calculus *outside* its own sphere of programmed competence, to the vast and profound problems of providence and destiny. Futurology *is* idle curiosity, the same as the experiments suggested by feminist ideologues: how to implant the fetus in the father's abdomen.

Sin begins with such curiosity. The ethics of the technological age, if there is such a thing beyond traditional ethics, would have to be founded on the biblical understanding that not everything that is technically possible is morally licit.

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WHY SOULS FLY AWAY *by Stephen J. Bodio*

"Some parrots are legal, but why cage exotic birds at all?"

—Chris Wille, *NAS*

Don't ask me, was my first thought. The last parrot I owned was—I swear—killed 10 years ago by an ex-friend who, with Joseph Krutch, believed that hunting was the ultimate evil. He left the bird loose in a room with my cats. Still, the larger implications of the editorial "Wildlife Caught in Miami Vice" (in *NAS*, the "News-Journal" of the National Audubon Society, April '86) continue to bother me.

On the surface, the editorial looks like a conventional piece of modern conservation wisdom. These days, the idea that you shouldn't "use" endangered species seems self-evident. Once this is accepted as a given, the notion that you probably shouldn't own animals, in whole or in part, begins to make sense at least to the unreflective. But has this always been so?

I am a member of several conservation groups. I write about animals, nature, and sport for my living. For nearly 20 years I have given my time to many and varied unselfish nature-oriented causes. As far as animals and wildlife and such go, I've always considered myself one of the good guys, as well as fairly *normal*, at least for somebody more interested in ecosystems and the identity of that sandpiper that just flew by than in baseball.

Lately, some of my allies in the conservation trenches have been giving me funny looks, especially some of the more recent volunteers. The whole matter has got to the point where I feel that not only hunters (already second-class citizens in some circles, despite their unarguable contributions to conservation) but even naturalists of the traditional kind are looked upon with the scorn previously reserved for those who build shopping malls in pristine habitats. There is something unhealthy going on here, something so fundamental that a refusal to face it may permanently cripple conservation as we know it. A kind of puritanism is abroad in the land that seems to reject any involvement with nature more intimate than through the TV set. For those of us who do *not* believe that "Nature is made possible by your local Public Television Station" (as they tell us here), this could bring on a disaster of the soul.

Let's start with this matter of owning animals, if only because it's such an obvious part of my life. My house is always full of inquilines. First, I have five dogs. Most people don't object to that—yet—at least since they stopped putting mustangs in cans. Although, since I breed dogs, not one is spayed or neutered, which is becoming a sin in some quarters. Next: I, like Darwin, keep a loft of pigeons. They are neither friends, exactly, nor practical; I don't need them. They are an at-home demo of natural selection, an addition of diversity to my *oikos*. Like the dogs, they are domestic, though some are rare breeds of endangered gene pools from Moorish Spain, kept only by me and one other fancier in the States. No huge problem here except—let me whisper it—that I have been known to eat individuals of the commoner kinds. I don't really like killing animals that I know personally; humans form kinship bonds with anything

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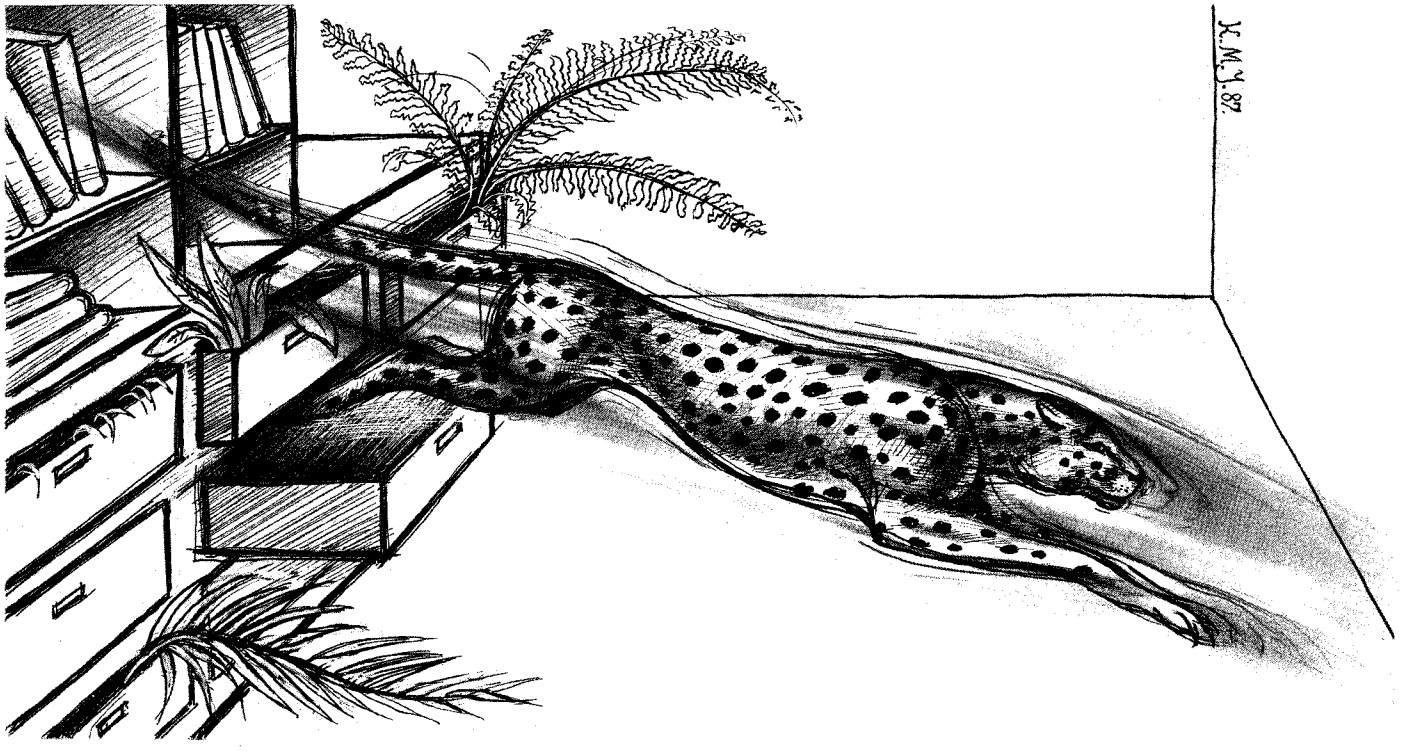

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that lives in their homes at their invitation, even fish. But their numbers increase, and—let me whisper even lower—I like the taste of pigeon.

A cat. Everyone, even vegetarians, keeps cats, maybe because they so obviously dominate the symbiosis.

A hawk. Oh-oh. A falcon, worse still. A *hunting* falcon—a domestic-bred hybrid falcon, half peregrine. A half-endangered species, genetic contamination, hunting, probably dominance and sadism. Falconry, surely a perversion morally equivalent to Nazism. Didn't Goering keep hawks?

My conscience alerted, I can see more evidence of a warped personality. Skulls, bones, feathers from my prey and the hawk's. The skulls of a horse, a sheep, a pig, a pronghorn. A for-the-moment-empty terrarium, with a snake stick leaning against it. A butterfly net, pointing to boxes full of (*dead!*) insects. And there's worse to come. Opened, the freezer reveals wrapped packages of white-tailed deer, wild pig, and Gambel's quail. How can a person with wildlife art on his walls and a room full of natural history books sink so low? Very easily, I'm afraid. I'm what's always been called a naturalist.

All through the 19th century, and well into the 1950's when I grew up, my habits were seen by most as eccentric but scarcely evil. Hunters, biologists, zoo keepers, and animal breeders were united in what Harvard's E.O. Wilson called "biophilia"—a fascination with nonhuman living things that makes a person realize that there is more to life than *Homo sapiens*. Wilson says: "We are human in good part because of the particular way we affiliate with other organisms. They are the matrix in which the human mind originated and is permanently rooted." But Wilson, the author of the best book to date on the roots of the conservation impulse, is hardly an advocate of animal liberation or hands-off practices. He is a field entomologist, an old-fashioned naturalist, a celebrant of Ortega y Gasset and the hunter's ethic, who looks beyond the compiling of knowledge to a higher synthesis where "the excitement of the scientist's search for the true nature of the species recedes, to be replaced in part by the more enduring responses of the hunter and poet." He has written (in *Biophilia*, Harvard University Press) the best essay to date on the conservation ethic and why it exists.

How did he get there?

When I read Wilson's book, one of the things that impressed me most strongly was how much alike our childhoods were, despite differences in age and geography. He grew up in the Florida Panhandle in the 30's. "Like most boys in that part of the country set loose to roam the woods I enjoyed hunting and fishing and made no clear distinction between these activities and life at large. But I also cherished natural history for its own sake and decided very early to become a biologist."

I was born after World War II in Dorchester, Massachusetts, a blue-collar neighborhood of Boston that features narrow streets lined with three-decker wooden houses. My earliest memories are of backyard ant nests, of watching rats and pigeons from a roofed porch, of a mouse that drowned in my bedside water glass, of sparrow and starling nests blown down by a hurricane. When at the age of four I moved 20 miles south to then-rural Easton, it might as well have been Africa. I wandered from dawn to dusk in the farm fields and along the railroad tracks.

I brought home everything. At one time a friend and I maintained for an entire summer a colony of toads, a pair of spotted turtles, a hognosed snake (we caught extra toads for it, being unwilling to sacrifice any of ours), a bluejay, a robin, and a terrarium of deer mice. I collected—killed, to be clear about it—insects. My father kept racing pigeons and gave me a little loft of show breeds when, at about eight, he judged me capable of caring for them. These in turn attracted hawks, which my father was enlightened enough not to shoot. In the fall he hunted, bringing home black ducks and ruffed grouse. In the winter there were always bird feeders, thronged with chickadees and nuthatches, jays and starlings, and sometimes a startling "rarity" like the evening grosbeak.

Later I, too, learned to hunt; then I took up the more demanding discipline of falconry. Still later, I lived in a tent on Mount Tom for a summer, working for the Cornell peregrine team as a small cog in what has become the most successful endangered species project yet accomplished. Each level was a direct result of the one before it: the animal-obsessed collecting kid became the hunter-naturalist, became the active conservationist.

My childhood, except in detail, is the childhood of all the naturalists who have given us their visions of the living world: Darwin, Hudson, Richard Jeffries, Theodore Roosevelt, William Beebe, Aldo Leopold, Konrad Lorenz, Edward Wilson, and Gerald Durrell. These are the thinkers who have shaped our perception of the nature and value of life, the crusaders who have battled for its preservation. Paradoxically, I fear the future existence of such biophiles is threatened by groups who claim to speak for the animals that the naturalists have made it possible to understand.

A critic, however, once said that fanatics are people who can't ever be bought. She meant that people who have no price, be it family or love or community, are warped. England's hunt saboteurs and hard-core "anti" strike forces have gone this far. They routinely endanger horses, hounds, and human hunters. They have released minks from farms into a countryside full of small animals with no natural defenses. They claim to have put rat poison into candy bars to protest experimentation and brag about having acquired automatic weapons. Some even say they would prefer that an animal become extinct rather than allow it to be hunted.

After *Audubon* magazine ran a couple of pieces *neutral*—not "pro"—on the subject of hunting, it received hundreds of letters. A few were sensible. Some advocated bloody death for hunters. Some called articles tolerant of hunting "obscene." Many wrote to resign from one of the country's more effective conservation groups. One even went so far as to lament "the demise of a once sensitive, humane organization." These letters come from gentle, "humane" readers with just a touch of antihunt fanaticism. They are people who, though they might recoil in horror at reading it, wish to ban outright anything they do not understand—sort of like the creationists they deplore. They are the new puritans.

A perfect example of the puritan attitude is contained in the editorial I quoted in the beginning of this piece. "Some ivory," says Wille, "is legal, but why have ivory at all?" His

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only answer pops up in the next paragraph: "It is human nature to covet that which is scarce and unusual." Let's forget for the moment the problems of the elephant and whether controlled harvest might encourage its conservation. The issue here is that rarity, except to the middleman, is not what anyone covets in ivory. Ivory is a warm, biological substance, beautiful on or off the elephant, pleasing to the touch. Love of ivory has its roots in biophilia, whether or not its possession is justified. To ignore this, or call it perverted, suggests a certain removal from the natural world.

The rage to ban is a curious passion. To think that anything not banned will automatically be done is crazy, not to mention totalitarian. It is the epitome of puritanism. If the federal government rolled back the ban on shooting songbirds tomorrow, *nothing would happen*. (This does work two ways, of course; no ban on shooting them is likely to work in northern Italy, where eating songbirds is sanctioned by custom.) Attitude is everything, and conservationists—all conservationists, whether anti- or pro-hunting—should concentrate their efforts and money on, first, habitat preservation, and, second, on fostering the kind of interest in the natural world that will ensure its survival into the 21st century.

Besides, we owe it to ourselves to maintain some sort of physical contact with nature lest we begin to doubt our right to exist. In 1976 John Crowley wrote the wonderful science fantasy novel *Beasts*. In it, a group of nouveaux puritans withdraws from the earth into an "arcology" called Candy's Mountain, which sits in the middle of a vast wild reservation. They grow all their food hydroponically in the immense building; they never touch the earth. "Withdraw," their founder preaches. "You have done enough damage to the earth . . . make yourself scarce, you can do that. Leave the earth alone; all its miracles happen when you're not looking."

Such is the logical end of the nature-puritan and animal liberation movements today. No one with a biological conscience would deny that, at some level, all species have an equal "right" to exist. This, however, has never kept any species from interacting with another. If you would go as far as the inhabitants of Candy's Mountain, why not, like some religious sects with similar notions of purification, take the whole philosophy to its logical end and withdraw entirely from a messy world? It's hard for this naturalist to see such attitudes as any saner than those espoused by the Reverend Jim Jones and Company.

I guess you can see where this argument is leading. I'm a fierce hands-on naturalist. I believe that a certain amount of active physical and psychological contact with animals, including but not limited to hunting and pet keeping, is not only tolerable but in fact downright necessary to the development of biophilia in the individual. Now let me take it all one step further: I believe this cannot take effect on the government level. Only individuals, never governments, can have a passion for animals. Governments *can't*, either economically or in their absent souls; in these days of Gramm Rudman, they won't; perhaps given their fickleness, they shouldn't. At very least they are not going to do anything lasting for conservation without enormous private help. I might point out as examples the Peregrine Fund and the Nature Conservancy, which have been more effective at their given ends than any government on earth.

And how can we, as individuals, increase biophilia?

For starters, I think we should get rid of the rules that make it impossible to keep live things at home, rather than throw up barriers to private involvement with animals. There would probably be an increase in pet-trade animal deaths, at least at first. But allowing individuals to possess native animals would undercut sleazy profiteers. You might also remember that many imported animals come from demolished rain forests, the loss of which is the most serious conservation problem facing us. If informed individuals could possess and breed such animals, they would provide a reservoir of priceless genetic material. This is not theory or propaganda: it has already happened. Consider Père David's deer, preserved by Chinese aristocrats and the Duke of Bedford; the eared pheasants, of which there are more in captivity than in their native Central Asia; the peregrine, rescued from its North American collapse by the quixotic dedication of the Cornell and P-Fund teams, hands-on naturalists to a man. Aviculturists have better reserves of many rare birds than their native Third World countries do. The breeders may or may not be selfish; what they are at the moment is more concerned about the various species than any government is. When the time comes, if the time comes, they can give stock back to the ancestral habitat.

Once you begin to think about helping nature by private initiative, any number of innovative solutions become possible. Take a look at ducks. Right now, their populations are in the middle of a crash. Reid Buckley, in an article in *Sporting Classics* magazine, asked duck hunters to consider paying a once-in-a-lifetime fee for a license, to be followed by annual payments of from $200 to $3,000 for different bag limits, the money going to habitat improvement. My point is not that this is the only way to go. It's that only a sportsman, a duck-o-phile, would suggest paying that much to save the ducks. I would submit that very few pure "lookers" would do so. (On hunting in general: I'd rather hunt my meat than buy it. Aesthetically; on grounds of kindness—death by predation is "natural"—even for conservation's sake, since game uses fewer resources than farming. I believe hunting is superior to agriculture. But I'm not prejudiced, at least against *small* farming; a gout, chacun.)

What about roadkills? I'm serious! Right now it is illegal to pick up and in any way preserve an avian carcass or part thereof that you can find beside the road! Yet study skins and skulls are intricate, thought-provoking objects, biophilic relics that can help us think about evolution adaptation and conservation. Surely it is not perverse to want to keep feathers? Two years back I was driving near dawn in the high forest of the Mescalero Apache reservation, when my bird-hungry eyes lit on a feathered lump at the edge of the roadside ditch. When I backed up, the lump resolved into a freshly killed spotted owl, a rare, endangered species, the only one I have ever seen. I took it home and skinned out its beautiful wings. I kept them for six months, but a not-too-irrational paranoiac voice kept telling me that if any federal officer on a routine falconry permit check ever wanted to bother me about them, he had grounds for putting me (and my hawks) in jail. I finally tossed them in the dump,

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which—I have come to think—is more of a crime than having taken them home, though not one punishable by law.

But, puritans object, people would trade in feathers! Though I doubt it, I might allow that trade in *authentically* endangered species parts be under heavy license. As for other things, if your bureaucratic mind demands tidiness, why not a roadkill permit? I don't really think it's necessary, but it should satisfy even rules addicts.

Hawks? Other birds? Read Bill Gilbert in the May '85 *Audubon*: "The solution is to make it easier and more respectable for [a blue-jay scholar] to enjoy blue jays rather than making it more difficult for others to enjoy hawks." Gilbert is one of the best spokesmen for hands-on I know; he argues that hands-on experiences "benefit wildlife by expanding its genuine constituency."

One more example: the California condor. Is it really biophilic to allow a species we have brought to the edge of extinction to go out without a final heroic effort? What possible harm would it do to either the individuals (who surely have no abstract conception of freedom) or the dying species to allow a zoo or even a private raptor breeder to attempt captive breeding? Thirty years of government-abetted hands-off have not prevented the present disaster.

Enough. There is a thread running through all this sound and fury—that only individuals have passions for animals. That biophilic individuals will donate their time and money to save living things. That biophilia is best developed by hands-on intimate contact of child and animal. (No, I don't think petting zoos are enough.)

We cannot just stand aside and observe without losing more than we gain. Today, our species dominates the planetary ecosystem; *we are stewards*, like it or not. "Hands-on" breeds empathy and respect. Despite their squabbles in recent years, there is no fundamental quarrel between the traditional naturalist and conservationist and the Burkean conservative. (The hard-core libertarian may resent any restraint or may innovatively say that conflicts would be minimized when all resources are owned privately and so accountable.) "Politically speaking, not all conservationists may be conservatives," said James Kilpatrick a few years back, "but if the appellation has any meaning, every principled conservative should count himself a conservationist." A world with healthy traditions benefits from and is enriched by hunter naturalists, keeper naturalists, and backyard explorers, all proponents of the old ways of direct study. We need Konrad Lorenzes and E.O. Wilsons to give us a perspective on our lives. If we encourage hands-on methods, we fertilize the ground in which they grow.

THE CHRISTIAN AND CREATION

by Peter J. Hill

Where does man fit into nature? What is his response to the created universe? Lynn White has argued that the Christian position is at the very heart of the environmental crisis. He, and others, see the biblical view of the dominion of man over nature as being responsible for our misuse of our natural resources. White argues, "Both our present science and our present technology are so tinctured with orthodox Christian arrogance towards nature that no solution for our ecological crisis can be expected from them alone."

It is true that man has a unique role in God's order. Genesis 1 states:

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (v. 26).
>
> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (v. 28).

The major verbs in these passages, *radah* (to rule) and *kabash* (to subdue), have a very firm, almost harsh ring. *Kabash* can be translated "to tread under foot" or "to conquer." Likewise *radah* can mean "to tread" or "to prevail against"—certainly a dominant relationship between man and creation is implied.

However, the view that man is to have dominion over nature must be informed by other passages. Psalm 8 imparts a sense of awe and wonder to us at our being made a part of God's magnificent creation. Genesis 2:15 also charges man to "care for" the Garden of Eden, softening the commands of the previous chapter. In addition, we have been given specific instructions for the careful stewardship of the land (Lev. 25:1-5), domesticated animals (Deut. 25:4), and wildlife (Deut. 22:6).

In the Old Testament, dominion was often used to describe the rule of a king over his subjects, but this rule entailed privileges *and* responsibilities. Numerous passages condemn rulers who exercised their privileges but did not fulfill their responsibilities towards those under them. Ezekiel 34:1-10 recounts God's condemnation of those who abrogate these standards.

What can be done so that we act more responsibly towards nature? Reform is possible in two areas: in the

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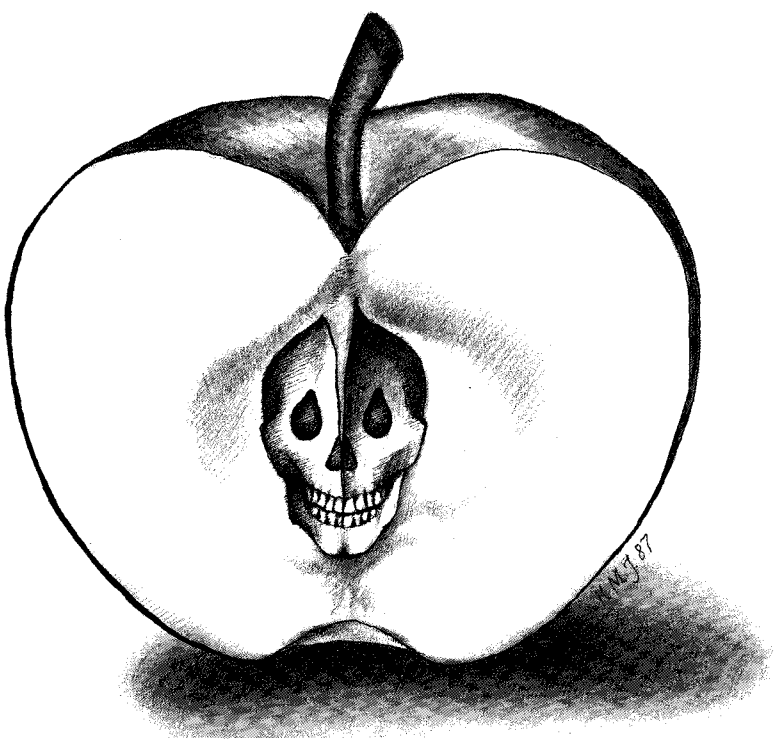
attitudes we and our fellow citizens have towards the created universe and in the legal framework that governs the use of natural resources. Law and conscience are both important components of a Godly use of our resources. Therefore we must examine both, change those parts that do not promote wise conservation, and sustain those parts that do.

The rules, or institutions, governing natural resources are important because people act on the basis of incentives and information. The incentives and the information are determined by social institutions. The social institutions relevant for resource management are simply the rules which assign responsibility for actions. They determine who can take what actions and who gets a hearing with regard to those actions—the system of property rights determines both information and incentives.

This framework keeps people from imposing costs on others without their willing consent and also allows individuals or groups to be rewarded for being sensitive to the needs of others. These *private property rights* inhere in individuals although those individuals can grant their rights to groups. It is important to remember that we do not really own any resources but rather only manage them for God.

Property rights can be termed private when exclusivity, liability, and transferability exist. Exclusivity means the resource owner can receive returns from using the property to benefit others and can also exclude others from those returns unless they have paid. A lack of exclusivity will lead to resource overuse. For instance, there were no exclusive rights in the American West in live North American bison. If one buffalo hunter decided that the magnificent creatures were being killed off too rapidly and would have preferred to slow down his rate of consumption, he could not capture the benefits of such a decision. Because he could not exclude others from harvesting an animal which he had avoided shooting, he had little incentive for conservation.



Liability forces the resource owner to bear the costs of actions that he takes which adversely affect others. Pollution is a prime example of inadequate rules of liability, since pollution imposes costs upon others without their willing consent. For instance, the problem with air pollution is not only that the atmosphere is being used for waste disposal but also that the polluters have acted without the prior consent of those whose air is violated. In such a case the polluter is not being held accountable for his actions, and property rights are not complete.

Transferability encourages the owner to use his property to the advantage of others. If rights to the resource can be bought or sold, the holder may lose wealth if he ignores any higher-valued wishes of potential buyers. When a landowner allows erosion, which lowers the productivity of his land, the market forces him to bear the costs of such inaction by decreasing the value of his land. Even if the owner does not care about erosion, the market enforces concern through changes in land prices. If land is not readily transferable, the adverse impact of erosion on his wealth is not so immediate or significant. In some states, rights to water are not easily transferable, and owners of water rights will ignore other demands for their resource because they cannot sell at a profit.

When property is held by government, it is difficult to establish full exclusivity, liability, and transferability. Governmental officials operate as agents for the citizens, and, as with all agent/principal relationships, an effort is made to limit the actions of agents. However, these limits do not insure full responsibility, nor do they allow agents to capture returns from good actions. If the manager of a public forest tries to sell access rights and pockets the profits, he is charged with malfeasance. Public managers are supposed to operate in the public interest precisely because they do not have claims on the returns from the resource. The lack of transferable shares means they can more easily ignore the wishes of others than can private resource owners. It is very difficult to set up a reward system so that the personal rewards of government officials vary directly with the value of the resource.

Appropriate institutional design is important—we need a system of accountability. Private property entails incentive, both negative and positive, to provide this accountability. In contrast, bureaucratic management of natural resources has demonstrated significant difficulties in maintaining accountability.

However, it is not simply a lack of appropriate incentive that creates resource management problems. To make correct decisions about the use of natural resources, the decision-maker must have adequate information. Even if all resource users were well-intentioned and unselfish, a lack of complete information could still prevent a society from the optimal use of its resources. To put a natural resource to its best use requires knowledge of the existing stocks, the availability of substitute resources, the technology for processing the resource (often speculative in an era of progress), the demands of consumers for products from that resource, and predictions about the future. A system of market prices based upon private property rights contains all this information and validates it automatically. Equally important, it is flexible, responding quickly to changes in any one of the

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conditions and generating the information relatively cheaply, in comparison to alternative means of obtaining that same knowledge. A private property system allows communication and coordination among millions of individuals, each with bits of knowledge carefully developed and expressed and crucial to the coordination process.

Public resource managers face very different sets of information. Prices generated by a market are essentially a series of statements about willingness to buy or sell property rights. Since, under public ownership property rights are incomplete, the information content of prices for public property (if they exist at all) is deficient. In such cases it is difficult to find out what values people really do place on resources. One does not know the views of others on alternative uses, and expectations about the future are not processed so carefully or stated as clearly as under private rights.

Private property also encourages mutual accommodation. Much of our discussion of natural resources revolves around the question of "who is going to get his or her way." However, under a market system based on private property, exchange allows both parties to come out better off. The existence of gains from trade means both participants can expect to profit. Cooperation, rather than conflict, is the hallmark of the private property market system. In contrast, under public management, conflict dominates. The lack of complete property rights means both decision-makers and special interest groups have little incentive to understand the position of opposing groups or to accommodate their desires.

A prime example of bureaucratic mismanagement of an important natural resource is to be found in the United States Forest Service. Responsible for the operation of some 140 million acres of forestlands, the agency personnel have continually taken environmentally and economically unsound actions. Much of the land which they administer has potentially conflicting multiple uses. However, professional pride and personal advancement encourage budget maximization for each forest district. These incentives are so strong that, despite stated multiple-use objectives, commercial timber production tends to dominate all other uses. Estimating production, putting tracts up for bid, building the necessary roads, and reforesting all involve high employment and large expenditures. Bureaucrats who promote timber production find their agency growing and their promotions more rapid.

Managing forests for commercial timber production is not necessarily bad. Timber products are in demand, and both the private and the public sector are meeting that demand. However, public sector timber managers face very different incentives and can ignore costs which their private sector counterparts can't. For instance, the U.S. Forest Service encourages the logging of areas that no private landowner would ever consider economically viable. From 1974 through 1978 over half the timber sales in the national forests did not cover the costs of timber management and reforestation (Emerson, Stout, and Kloepfer). The case is even worse in the Northern Rocky Mountains and in Alaska. In 1981 over 88 percent of the sales in two Rocky Mountain regions were below cost, and in 1982, 96 percent failed to cover costs. In 1983 each dollar spent on timber sales in Alaska generated two cents in receipts (Emerson, Stout, and Kloepfer). Private sector forest managers could ill afford such economically suicidal behavior.

It should also be remembered that much of the land on which the forest service is subsidizing logging has considerable environmental amenities. Its highest valued use is in something other than commercial timber production. This land contains some of the most spectacular scenery in America and offers recreation to backpackers, hunters, and fishermen. Logging often conflicts with these uses. The inaccountability of public sector resource managers has produced both resource waste and environmental degradation.

Another illustration of poor public sector accountability is the infamous Love Canal case in Niagara Falls, New York. Love Canal was an unused waterway designed in the 1890's as a part of a never completed hydroelectric project. It was purchased by Hooker Chemical and Plastics Corporation in 1942 and used for disposal of over 21,800 tons of toxic chemical wastes. Hooker chose the site because it was in a relatively unpopulated area and because impermeable clay made it suitable for the disposal of hazardous materials. During the use of the canal for disposal, Hooker acted responsibly, in accordance with the accepted technology of the time. Care was taken not to breach the clay walls of the canal, and four feet of clay was deposited over the chemical wastes. Among Hooker's motivations, surely the least was not accountability for its private actions, through liability for any adverse consequences of its disposal practices. Hooker's lawyers advised proper management, and the company acted accordingly.

In 1953, however, the story takes a turn when the Niagara Falls Board of Education acquired Love Canal as a potential site for a school. Hooker first refused to sell, citing the potential danger, but later sold the land to the board for $1.00 under threat of condemnation. They attached a paragraph to the deed stating that they had used the canal for disposal and wanted to be relieved of future liability if the land was used in a way that released the chemicals. Hooker also required the school board officials to inspect the land and be present while eight test borings were made. Two were sunk into the canal proper and encountered chemicals four feet below the surface; the other six outside of the canal ran into no chemicals. Hooker further requested that the land be used only for park purposes, in conjunction with a school on nearby land.

Despite the repeated attempts of Hooker Chemical to warn of the dangers inherent in the use of the Love Canal site, six months later the school board voted to remove 4,000 cubic yards of fill from the top of the canal to provide dirt for grading at another school site. Another 3,000 yards were removed in 1954. In 1957 the board debated a proposal to trade the site to a developer in return for cash and other land. Hooker found out about the proposed trade and again went before the board to remind them of the original verbal and written agreements on the use of the land. They reiterated that the land was unsuitable for construction which might breach the canal and repeated their recommendations that only surface use should be contemplated.

Despite Hooker Chemical's continued expressed con-

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cern, in the fall of 1957 a sanitary sewer was laid across Love Canal, breaking both the clay cover and the clay canal walls. The sewer bed was gravel, providing a path for chemicals to leach out of the canal. This was the first time the canal walls were penetrated. However, further breaching soon occurred. In 1960 a new storm sewer penetrated the west wall of the canal. Finally, in 1968 the New York Department of Transportation cut the canal again while constructing an expressway. The first major public outcry over the dangers of the chemical wastes came in 1978, and later that year the state of New York declared Love Canal a health hazard. That was followed by the closing of the adjacent school and the evacuation of 255 families.

If there is ever a case that cries out for strict accountability, it is hazardous waste disposal. Without such accountability enormous costs can be imposed on people who have no choice in the matter. However, not too much should be read into the account of Love Canal. It is not meant as a uniform condemnation of all government officials. Many do act responsibly when faced with waste disposal decisions. Neither should we assume that all private companies act appropriately. There are numerous cases when such companies have disposed of their wastes without being held liable. Such cases, unfortunately, are the result of inadequate property rights and demand a reform of the legal system to better enforce liability. Such legal liability rules are an important part of a well-functioning private property set up. It is also interesting to note that in most cases where toxic wastes have been inappropriately disposed of, public (common) property has been used for dumping. Without private property rights, there is no owner whose wealth and welfare demand responsible use of the property.

Particularly illustrative is the contrasting behavior of the public officials and representatives of Hooker Chemical in the Love Canal case. The public officials faced markedly different incentives than Hooker. Throughout the entire use of the canal for disposal and the subsequent problems, Hooker had a much longer view than did the Niagara Falls board of education. Hooker understood that it was potentially liable for adverse future effects and acted accordingly. It was very willing to sacrifice short-term gains to avoid long-term liability. In contrast, the board had a limited view of the future. Current budgets and immediate political pressure were far stronger motivators for the board members than long-term considerations. Also, without the decision-makers' financial liability, there was less incentive for the public officials to accurately inform themselves about the canal and its chemicals compared to what Hooker officers were previously facing.

Again, as in the case of the Forest Service, the lack of well-defined and transferable property rights meant board members were not held accountable for the costs imposed upon society; similarly there was little reward for taking a long-term view or for seeking additional information. As one board member said, "the Board of Ed didn't do anything wrong. Anyway, we don't have any legal responsibility for it."

A test of any communication or coordination system is its ability to respond to major changes. By this measure the private property framework of the market does well. Throughout history there have been predictions that the increasing scarcity of some natural resource spells almost certain doom for society. Although the energy crisis of the 1970's is freshest in our memory, similar situations have occurred numerous times in the past. Charles Maurice and Charles Smithson detail 10 such crises, spread over 100 centuries, in their book, *The Doomsday Myth*. In each case the information and incentives generated by the market encouraged responses that rendered inaccurate the doom-saying of numerous people.

In 1905 President Theodore Roosevelt threatened that "if the present rate of consumption [of timber] is allowed to continue . . . a [timber] famine is inevitable." The United States timber crisis of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century was of major concern. This was an age of rapid economic growth, but wood, essential for this growth, was becoming more and more scarce. In 1908 one leader even suggested banning Christmas trees as a partial answer to the timber shortage. Given the rate of wood use in 1900, a rapid depletion of an important resource could be predicted.

The rate of use did not continue, however. Faced with rising wood prices, both consumers and producers responded. Railroads, major users of wood for sleepers, substituted alternative materials — usually steel or concrete — changed designs to conserve wood, and used chemical preservatives to extend its life. Wood had been used as a major source of fuel in both industry and home, but with rising prices coal became a cheaper substitute. Housing construction changed dramatically, with balloon frames replacing a more copious use of timber.

By the 1920's, the wood crisis was over. The scarcity of timber did not end economic growth; neither did it severely disrupt the economy. The price system quickly informed both producers and consumers of a need to mend their ways, and they responded rapidly and dramatically.

England had undergone a similar wood crisis long before the one in the United States. In the 16th and 17th centuries the price of firewood rose 730 percent, while the general price index increased only 177 percent. Wood was critical for almost all of Britain's industries. It was used to smelt iron, lead, tin, and copper and in glass production. Salt, a major preservative when few other methods of food preservation were available, was obtained by using charcoal to evaporate seawater. Again, in response to rising wood prices, appropriate modifications occurred. Technological changes to use coal evolved, and by 1700 Great Britain had escaped this particular resource crisis.

Other examples abound. Whale oil was a critical resource in 19th-century America, but as whale oil prices rose, petroleum was refined to serve as both a superior lubricant and illuminant. In ancient Greece bronze was crucial to the economy. However, when tin, an important component of bronze, became scarce, iron replaced bronze. The U.S. was critically dependent upon natural rubber prior to World War II. With the beginning of the war and the loss of much of our rubber supplies, synthetic rubber became a profitable alternative. Changes in resource availabilities have occurred often in the past and will continue to occur in the future. If prices are allowed to communicate their message, we have little to fear from these changes.

Another important aspect of the communication of

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information is across generations. The present generation needs to seek knowledge of the needs and desires for resources of future generations. Particularly in the case of exhaustible resources, we must be concerned not to severely disadvantage the future residents of our planet. Interestingly enough, private property rights are superior to public ownership in predicting and regulating future needs. Under public ownership wise managers may decide to preserve for the future, that is, attitudes may influence their behavior. However, if these managers truly reflect the wishes of the voting public, they will use resources more rapidly than under private ownership.

Under public management, the median voter's preference for the appropriate rate of resource use should dominate. In other words, if voters are *perfectly unselfish*, then a properly functioning democracy will use the resource at the rate of the median holder of those opinions. However, under private rights, those who are most optimistic and believe the resource should better and more profitably be used in the future will dominate. And they will do so even if they are *perfectly selfish*. Those optimists, knowing and caring about their commodities, will outbid people with other beliefs and will force a lower rate of exhaustion. For a resource to be used today, present consumers must outbid all those who believe the resource will be more valuable in the future. Thus a private property system will lead to a much slower rate of depletion than democratic public management.

Since future generations do not yet exist, they need agents to represent them in today's society. These agents cannot know perfectly the desires of people not yet born, but they can make educated guesses. In the market, these agents are either unselfish custodians of the future or they are speculators, acting upon their perception of future demands for resources. If their perceptions are correct, they increase their wealth; if they guess wrongly, they lose. Thus speculators have strong incentives to be well-informed and to predict correctly the needs of future generations. In the public arena, in contrast, there is no mechanism for rewarding those who make correct predictions.

Private property rights are also a set of institutions that foster cooperation. By holding individuals accountable for the costs they impose on others, or by allowing them to benefit from being sensitive to the others (present or future), private rights encourage mutual accommodation. Numerous adjustments in behavior are possible for the private property owner when they become worthwhile, that is, when they allow the property owner to further his goals. An example is to be found among oil companies and environmental groups when they are contesting the use of public land or when, in contrast, they are debating the appropriate use of private land.

In recent years the U.S. Congress has debated the expansion of the public acreage designated as wilderness areas. This is simply a reclassifying of existing public land from multiple use to a more preserved status. Nevertheless, the debate has been fraught with conflict. The major environmental groups have generally favored the inclusion of more land in the wilderness classification. They admit no virtue to the opposition. The oil companies, on the other hand, have fought such reclassification, arguing that there is potential for major oil finds in some of those areas and that our national interest is jeopardized by withholding them from potential exploration. The public debate has been heated and acrimonious, with both sides mounting major publicity campaigns for their point of view. Charges of misrepresentation and fraud have been leveled, and both sides have "hard-lined" their positions. The environmentalists have charged that there is no possibility for oil and gas exploration to be compatible with environmental concern, while the oil companies have argued that exploration and production must go forward with little attention to the environment.

On private land, no matter who owns it, both parties display much more tolerant and cooperative attitudes. The National Audubon Society has a major bird sanctuary of 26,800 acres in Louisiana. The Michigan Audubon Society, the second largest of the state societies, owns and operates the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary in southern Michigan. In both cases the Audubon Societies have clear title and can manage their land in any manner they deem best. On both preserves, obtaining and preserving quality bird habitat is the primary goal. In the Rainey Sanctuary in Louisiana, the snow goose is the major bird under protection, although attention is also paid to other wildlife. The Baker Sanctuary contains a nesting area for sandhill cranes, and much effort is made to maintain the ecological integrity of their habitat.

The most interesting part of the sanctuaries, however, is oil and gas exploration and production on them. In both cases the exploration was undertaken after the Audubon Society had established ownership; it came with their approval, indeed, at their request. In the 1950's the Rainey preserve signed its first gas lease, and three companies now operate six gas-producing wells. After considerable internal debate, the Michigan Society agreed, in 1981, to allow oil and gas exploration on their property, and a producing well was soon established. The attitudes of the participants in the exchange is significant: Both the oil companies and the Audubon Societies exhibited every willingness to cooperate. No expensive publicity battles were waged, no name-calling

Autumn Day

by Rainer Maria Rilke

(translated by Alban Coventry)

Lord! It is time. The summer days were full;Now lay thy shadows on the warm sundials,
And loose the wind upon these grassy isles;
Bid the unfallen fruits ripen and swell;
Grant them just two more days of sunny clime;
Urge them to their perfection and instill
The final sweet into the heavy wine.
Whoever has no house and is alone,
Now builds no more and will alone remain,
Will wake and read and write with tired brain,
And when the last brown leaves are earthward blown,
Will wander, restless, in the falling rain.

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occurred, and on both sanctuaries cordial relationships continue among sanctuary managers and oil company executives and workers.

Are the Audubon Society managers of the Michigan and Louisiana preserves less concerned about the environment than those environmentalists debating the potential for oil exploration in the Bob Marshall Wilderness? Did the oil companies choose more cooperative individuals to deal with the Audubon Society in the Louisiana and Michigan cases?

The most likely explanation can be found in the different rules governing property in the contrasting cases. When public land-use conflicts occur, those who disagree have little incentive to look for potential agreement. Aggressive behavior is rewarded. Picturing one's opponents as heinous, base, and selfish is appropriate.

In contrast, under private ownership there is little return for name-calling. Ways to beneficial agreements by satisfying others at the least cost to oneself are needed, and mutual accommodation is rewarded. That is precisely what happened in the case of the Audubon preserves. The Audubon people found they could better provide quality bird habitat (there and elsewhere) by cooperating with the oil companies. The gas wells on the Rainey Sanctuary generate a million dollars a year in royalties. The producing well on the Michigan preserve generated $100,000 in revenue for the Audubon Society the first year; it is now providing $50,000 in annual royalty payments. These revenues have allowed both Audubon groups to purchase other habitats and to manage existing sanctuaries better. The environment for the birds is not entirely pristine because of the wells, but the Audubon members evidently found the trade-offs worthwhile.

The oil companies also had to make significant concessions. Restrictions were placed on times of exploration. In the Michigan case, slant drilling was used to minimize disturbance of prime nesting habitat. High-efficiency mufflers were required on all equipment, and all machinery was painted medium moss green. Michigan Petroleum Exploration also had to pay for a monitor appointed by the Michigan Audubon Society. The monitor oversaw operations and ensured minimum environmental disturbance.

It is evident that numerous concessions had to be made by both sides. However, private property rights encouraged cooperation and minimized conflict.

We do not know the future, nor is there a consensus about resource values. Therefore it is beneficial for a society to provide a mechanism for diverse preferences and projections about resource uses to be expressed. The private property system, based upon individual decision-making, expresses that diversity much better than a system of public ownership under collective decisions rule. A strong case can be made that minority viewpoints are expressed and respected much more in the marketplace than in the political arena.

In the 1920's, a leading conservationist, Rosalie Edge, became concerned with the conservation groups' lack of interest for the preservation of nongame birds. She argued that the Audubon Society and state game departments were mainly dedicated to protecting game species and songbirds. She was particularly incensed over the wholesale slaughter of raptors as they migrated down the Appalachian Mountains. In eastern Pennsylvania, Hawk Mountain was a popular spot for killing hawks, falcons, osprey, and eagles because winds and topography brought as many as 20,000 a day past the mountain.

Angered at this slaughter, Mrs. Edge attempted to convince the Hawk and Owl Society, an affiliate of the National Association of Audubon Societies, to purchase the mountain and stop the killing. The Society failed to act. Taking matters in her own hands, Mrs. Edge purchased the property in 1934, hired a young naturalist to manage and police it, and effectively stopped the slaughter. Today Hawk Mountain Sanctuary stands as a monument to Rosalie Edge's farsightedness. During the fall migration, as many as 3,000 people a day crowd the lookouts to observe the large numbers of birds.

If Mrs. Edge had depended upon convincing a majority of the population or the policymakers that preservation of raptors was important, she would have had a difficult task. During this period, most states encouraged the shooting of hawks to protect farm poultry and game birds. In Pennsylvania in 1934 it was legal to shoot all hawk species, and the state paid a bounty on goshawks. Even the Audubon Society was ambivalent about raptors. Fortunately Mrs. Edge had to convince only the owner of the property of the strength of her concerns. He sold her the land, she acted on her vision of the future, and her minority view turned out to be valuable for the rest of us.

In Oregon one can visit, for a fee, the largest sea caves in the United States. They are the only mainland rookery of Steller's sea lions. Discovered in 1880 by Captain William Cox and purchased by him in 1887 from the state of Oregon, the sea lion caves have remained in private hands ever since and, after 1932, have been operated as a public attraction. About 200 Steller's sea lions are resident, and other sea lion species and seals also use the caves. The total sea lion caves property consists of 125 acres of coast, and development of this acreage has been kept to a minimum.

Sea lions, although not valued for their fur, were nevertheless almost hunted to extinction because of their perceived threat to the fishing industry. It was believed that the sea lions and seals were significant consumers of sports fish and were especially hard on salmon. By the early 1900's Oregon had a $2.50 bounty on seals and sea lions, and in 1920 the state legislature asked the State Fish Commission to exterminate the entire coastal population of both animals. The bounty was raised to $5.00, and in 1921 alone one hunter killed over 1,000.

One of the major factors contributing to the preservation of the sea lion during the 1920's and 1930's was the efforts of the owners of the sea lion caves. They protected their resident population and drove the bounty hunters away. Again, private property owners could stand against prevailing wisdom because they did not have to convince a majority of the population. As in the case of Hawk Mountain, government agencies were not preserving a species but were encouraging its depletion. As representatives of the majority opinion, they were taking the course of action the majority preferred. However, the diversity of private rights proved useful, in these cases, as well as many others.

It is sometimes argued that our private property rights are

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based on the Roman concept of exclusive and absolute rights to property. As such, this concept of rights is seen in conflict with the Christian view of a property right being a limited, stewardship right. However, transferable private property rights are actually more a way of keeping property use dependent upon the desires and needs of others. Under public ownership, resource managers can act more absolutely and much more independently of others. Though private rights do not put absolute limits on the actions of property holders, they are held accountable (through increases or decreases in their wealth) for the degree of their accommodation of others.

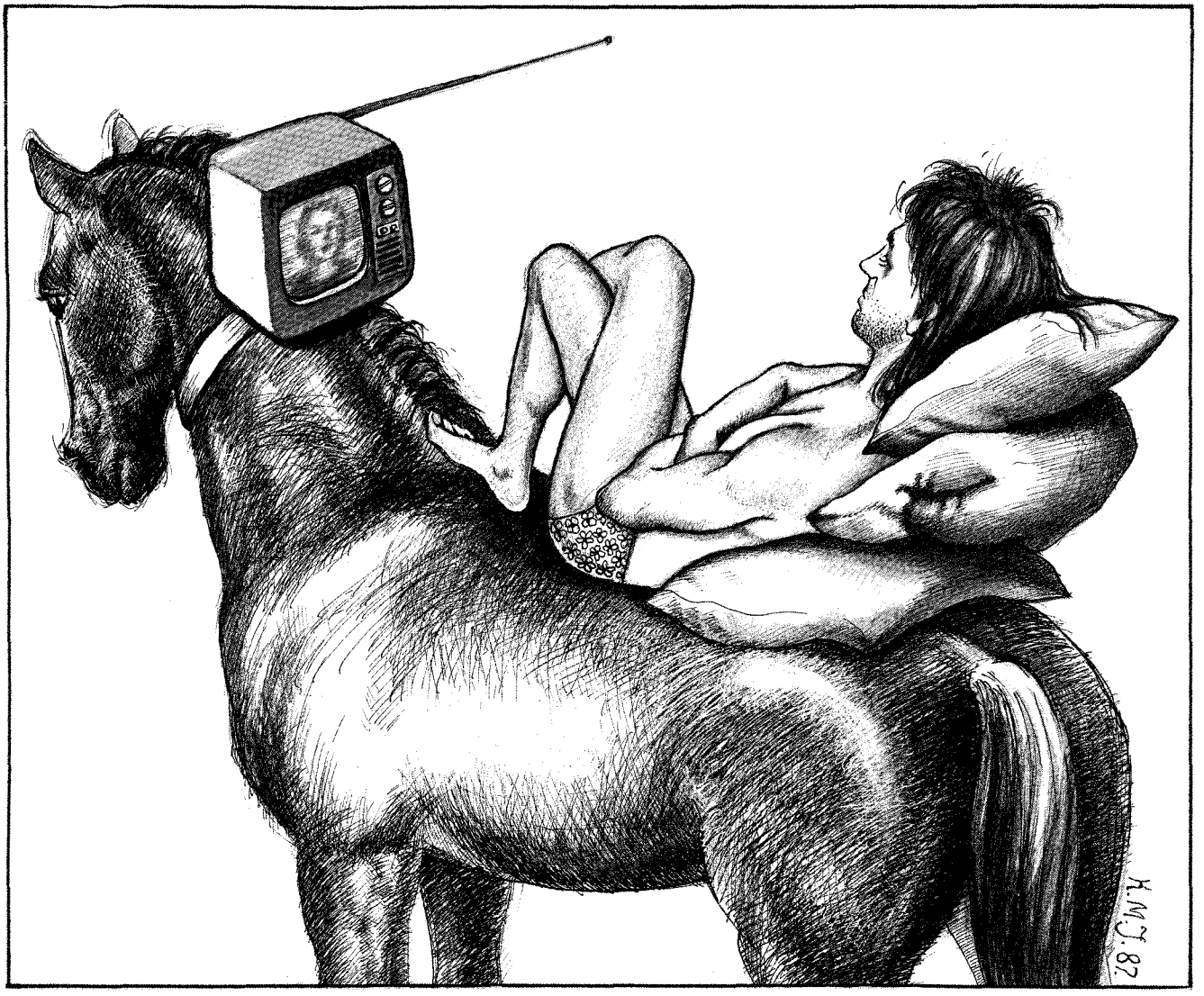
Establishing private property rights is not the entire answer to our natural resource problems. We also depend upon a high degree of responsibility, tolerance, and mutual understanding. However, since such attitudes have never universally prevailed, moving away from private ownership toward public rights will not help the situation; rather it will worsen it.

MY COUNTRY 60's *by Jigs Gardner*

I lived in Vermont from 1962-71, and I met many of what I later came to call 60's people. While I recognized them for what they were at the time—that required no great penetration—nevertheless there were things about them that puzzled me: Why did they suddenly appear in droves there and then? Why were they taken so seriously? Most puzzling of all, how was it that they completely escaped analysis and criticism?

The way we got mixed up with the 60's people is a little embarrassing to relate. In September 1962, my wife and I

Jigs Gardner writes from Nova Scotia.



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and our four small children moved from Massachusetts, where I had been teaching, to a farmhouse on a remote hillside in northern Vermont. We had a dozen hens, a cow, $300, and the rent was paid for two years. I did not know then and I cannot tell now what we thought we were doing; "living off the land" may have been part of it (though that movement had not yet begun), but I am not sure, simply because I am uncertain as to whether we had gotten that far in our thinking.

Because of the appearance of our situation, as well as the fact that the place we rented belonged to a locally notorious proto-60's person (in the fullness of time—and of bitterness—we called him Mr. Simple Living, after a pamphlet he wrote extolling the virtues thereof), it was assumed by all that we belonged to the new breed. So we saw the 60's world from inside, while our lack of money kept us detached from it.

Money. The great undiscussed subject of the 60's. Without exception, every 60's person I knew had money or ready access to it, and they all lied about it, pretending always that they had very modest means and that the little bit they had was earned by hard work. Money was the only thing that set us apart from the 60's people; otherwise we were indistinguishable from them: young (they were in their 20's and 30's), born and raised in the Bos-Wash suburbs, educated in the humanities at Eastern liberal arts colleges and prestige universities, wholly unintellectual, possessing a mental stock consisting not of received ideas but of received attitudes. What money meant to them and why they lied about it were clearly important questions which remained mysteries to me for some time. The consequences of our impecuniousness, on the other hand, were apparent almost at once.

It would be a few years before a move like ours would be widely applauded by all right-thinking citizens; at the moment it was regarded by our relatives and former friends as an act of almost maniacal stupidity for which we deserved whatever we got, and then some. In spades. And double good riddance. For the first time in our lives, we were on our own. We could not avoid the results of our own folly; we had to see it through to the end. Whatever became of us would be entirely our own doing. Although we learned a great deal, and very quickly, from the practical realism of our new life, the most important lesson was a general truth of character: Forced to do everything for ourselves, nothing could be shirked or falsified. We suffered a discipline in honesty. Be assured that I would have chosen wealth and idleness over honesty any day. The trouble was, we had no choice.

Naturally, our experience made us sensitive, perhaps oversensitive, to behavior that falsified what we were doing and learning—the behavior, we soon discovered, of 60's people.

The Woodwrights were a charming couple who owned a picturesque farm and lived in a pretty little house—blue and rose stencils on rough-cast plaster walls, brightly polished old wood stove—which they never tired of showing to visitors. In fact, I first began to have doubts about the Woodwrights when they told me proudly how many viewers they had the previous weekend, because it made me think about some scenes I had witnessed there and at our own place. While we were no competition for the Woodwrights, we got a sprinkling of similar rubbernecks, mainly disciples and acquaintances of Mr. Simple Living, just up from Boston for a drive to look at the leaves, or flying in from New York to check the locks on the summer place. What they did, both to us and to the Woodwrights, was to cast us as stars in a morality play called the Beautiful Simple Country Life, while we half-consciously encouraged them: To make the play work, both actors and audience have prescribed lines, specific tasks and actions and gestures, collaborating, as I belatedly realized, in the fictionalization of our lives (the game of 20 Beautiful, etc. Questions—"And you raise all your food yourselves?" "You use horses for everything?" "You grind the flour in that little mill?"—played a prominent part in the drama). I liked the Woodwrights very much, but after that, when I realized that they courted their roles, I felt just a little scornful of them. Perhaps I was being a prig, but after all, the whole phonus-balonus was easy enough to stop: Just quit responding to cues ("No, we never grind flour in that thing; we buy it in town"). But then, all the admirers go away.

Meanwhile, I met my first hippie homesteaders at the Woodwrights, appropriately, because they, too, were role-players. They became the most prominent 60's people in the countryside, not just because of their numbers—within a couple of years they were flooding Vermont, disfiguring the landscape with their yurts and A-frames, tepees and tree houses—but because for a decade or so nearly every newspaper and magazine in the nation featured articles extolling hippie homesteaders near and far, spotlighting their roles as the visitors had done for us and the Woodwrights. These were plucky young folks, independent and self-sufficient, who were living off the land and teaching us precious lessons about the environment, love, peace, justice, etc., as they nobly attempted to escape the dreadful ills of contemporary America (the "rat race," pollution, alienation, etc.) in the bosom of Mother Nature. The story is too well-known to bear repeating. The point to keep in mind, however, is that those articles, virtually identical assemblages of clichés, were all invariably and utterly lies. I doubt if a single truthful word was ever published about the hippie homesteaders; their very breath was falsehood. They weren't independent, they weren't self-sufficient, they didn't do anything they said they did. But they were very popular with the middle class (their rural neighbors more or less ignored them) for the same reasons that the Woodwrights were: Their Beautiful Simple Country Life dramas boosted the egos not only of the participants, but also of the observers, even the distant readers of a newspaper article. How often had I seen visitors' faces glow with mingled wonder and satisfaction as they asked those absurd rhetorical questions about the grain mill or the workhorses.

I think Country Fakery (as we came to call it) was immediately superficially popular because it set its participants apart from and above the masses of yahoos out there in Consumerland. As the privileged often do, confusing aesthetics with ethics, they certified their superiority by *taste*: the enlightened ones parked their VW microbuses or Landrovers beneath the elms beside the village green, while boorish proles or repressed lower-middle-class clerks drove to their senseless jobs in Detroit behemoths; the illuminated

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togged themselves from the L.L. Bean catalog, the unwashed fought over polyester shirts on sale at Zeller's, and so on through all the objects and rituals of a complex modern society, the highest on the list of taste tests being the pastoral myth itself which, in its 60's form, allowed its believers to think of themselves, even vicariously, as unimplicated in gross contemporary society while enjoying all its fruits.

I thought that the popularity of Country Fakery ran deeper than the motivation of flattery would suggest, and it was another discovery about the Woodwrights that provided me with the beginning of an answer. I had known Mrs. Woodwright's brother Jack before we moved to Vermont; it was he who attracted us there and had secured the lease from the distant Mr. Simple Living. Both he and the Woodwrights had very small herds of Jersey cows, and they seemed quite self-reliant to me: They cut their own lumber and firewood, they tapped their maple trees, and so on. Because their operations were so small, I thought their knowledge would be relevant to our situation, and I was counting heavily on being able to rely on their advice and guidance. One day I hurt myself, and Jack kindly drove me to a doctor. On the way, I explained how anxious I was about my health, because for the first time in my life I was independent, the sole support of my family. Jack, who was in his late 30's, cheerfully replied that he had never been independent because his wealthy mother gave him a generous allowance. She had bought the cows and paid for the new well and bought the truck. My heart sank. It dropped into my boots when he told me that his sister also received a large allowance. But the Woodwrights pretended that their Beautiful Simple Life all came out of the milk check.

Understand me: I had no objection to the Woodwrights' way of life, and I couldn't care less where their money came from, but the pretense bothered me. Why couldn't they be honest and admit that they could afford to farm in an agreeable, easygoing way (with much help) because they had an outside income? There was nothing shameful about that. After all, even the most cursory observation of the many farmers in the area showed that while it was possible in those days to make a living with a small herd of Jerseys, it was hard, hard work, and there was damned little beauty in it. I had to meet a lot of hippie homesteaders and people like the Woodwrights before I was able to understand that the reason they lied (and most of them probably deceived themselves, too) was that their *imaginary* position gave them an extraordinary sense of freedom from constraint.

Look at it this way: If the Woodwrights had been candid about their income, then their achievement on the farm would not have seemed nearly so impressive, because it would have been realized that, far from performing some extraordinary feat of legerdemain, they had merely purchased the means to do the work. The amount of labor remains the same, but now the farmer can linger over the teacups with visitors because he is paying someone else to mow his hay. Now what if you're a Country Fake and you convince yourself that your outside income doesn't really count, is insignificant, and that the entire operation is financed by farm sales? (I have known hippie homesteaders who claimed that a garden the size of my kitchen paid for everything, including a new four-wheel drive truck.) And you have spare time, you entertain visitors, and you read books? Don't you see that it must seem as if you have suspended some physical laws? That was the imaginary position, the freedom that so exhilarated the Country Fakes. Incidentally, that's why they scorned the methods of efficient modern agriculture—machinery, fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides, hybrid seed—because they had abrogated the laws of practical farming reality.

Then there was another group of 60's people closely related to the hippie homesteaders, the "revolutionaries." Morris Rosen (known to all as Momo), one of my former students, came to me for tutoring in the summer of '63. He was a scholarship boy who had quickly attached himself to his richer classmates, so I was little taken aback when he said grimly, after a tour of the farm on his first morning, that it would be a good place for guerrilla training.

"Guerrilla training?"

"Yeah. I know some of the top cats in Progressive Labor who'd really dig this joint for maneuvers."

I laughed uneasily. I needn't have worried; Momo was really flexing his poses, as I realized in a moment when he told me about his "dilemma": Should he, or should he not, come the imminent revolution, shoot his parents, who were, as he finely phrased it, "petty bourgeois to their fingertips"? I tried to change the subject by suggesting that it was really a delicate personal matter, but Momo would have none of that.

"It's not personal," he sternly pointed out, "it's a matter of revolutionary justice!"

He dragged his dilemma around for a couple of days until my wife told him to shoot the old folks and shut up about it. That produced massive sulks, something that always happened whenever Momo suspected that we weren't taking his preposterous routines seriously enough. One hot night we were sitting around the kerosene lamp reading, sweating, swatting mosquitoes, and listening to my wife express her yearning for cooling drinks, iced sherbet, and other bourgeois frivolities (we had no refrigeration), when Momo, hitherto absorbed in a deathless pamphlet by V.I. Ulyanov, suddenly slapped it on the table and bellowed, "What this country needs is a LENIN!"

"Yes, damn it," my wife sourly retorted, "a Lenin ice."

Sulks again, and then more sulks when we were lukewarm in our enthusiasm for the awful stories—seamless imaginative fictions, dedicated to proletarian culture—that he was writing in his role as Revolutionary Artist. I will spare you my memories of the stories, but I can't resist a bit of his poetry:

> Yes the people the workers I am with you
> black yellow red I am with you
> the machine guns stuttering stitching red kisses
> on the bodies of the ruling class and its running
> dogs yes . . .

I have treated Momo with levity because he seemed absurd, posing in one self-regarding role after another. No one took him seriously—but that was in 1963.

Momo compares revealingly with another former student from the same college, Mike, who turned up towards the end of the 60's with his wife, Rachel. They disclosed that, as dedicated members of a faction from SDS, their job was to

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bore from within the Teamsters' Union, radicalizing it in preparation for the imminent revolution, to which end they worked in a trucking firm, Mike as a loader, Rachel as a dispatcher. In between ecstatic tales of their experiences in Cuba cutting sugar cane, Mike filled me in on the career choices of some of his classmates: Peter was doing great work in the M-----f-----, Bill was running guns, Brad was high up in the Weathermen, Hugh was making bombs . . . and on it went, a roster of names of conventional, upper-middle-class students associated with the nuttiest, most theatrically violent groups onstage at the time. To grasp the significance of these revelations, one has to know the venue.

Tweedy College, my alma mater and the last place I had taught before moving to Vermont, was one of those small, mediocre liberal arts colleges suffering from delusions of ivied grandeur that abound in New England. It had specialized for years as a finishing school for rich second-raters, the kind of men who finally become Third Vice Presidents. Mike's vignettes showed me a convergence: The 60's were mainstreaming, and Tweedy was beginning to swing with a new *Zeitgeist*. These wayward boys would soon be back on track; when conventional people join wildly extremist groups, it's a Momo routine. Nor did it take much clairvoyance to see that their present antics would one day make some of the brighter pages in their resumes. (Tweedy, of course, would soon have Black Studies, Women's Studies, a homosexual club, Marxists in Residence, etc., etc.)

At first sight, it looked as if Momo's fantasies were being acted out by Mike and Rachel and their friends, thus showing the progression of radicalism in a few years, but it was still an act, still a fantasy, self-regarding role-playing essentially the same as Momo's. There was this difference: Momo had not dared to strut his stuff anywhere but on our remote farm, knowing that he would be laughed at in the wider world; it was clear that Mike and Rachel and their friends were taken solemnly. Why? And what did it portend?

The answers came with another former student, Lenny, who exemplified one of the commonest 60's types, so pathetic that I often think of it as a class of victims. When I first knew Lenny in 1960, he was only a foolish freshman with a vacant grin, a harmless kid who wore his red and yellow high school warm-up jacket on all occasions (a sartorial blunder at Tweedy). Some time after Mike and Rachel's visit, there appeared at our door a rusty bread van, plastic flower decals on the hubcaps, LOVE painted on its sides, out of which stepped sandals, flowing robe, long hair, headband—all attached to Lenny. He had quit grad school ("I split the scene, man, too uptight"), had left a wife in California ("Too many hassles, man. I split the scene on my bike"), had driven across country on his Honda, picked up a job on an "underground" paper in Boston, and was now looking for organic communal life on the land in Vermont.

Judging from his appearance, we all imagined Lenny would have some interesting or profound or bizarre truths for us, but his word-hoard was limited to the hippie lexicon: "like, man," "y'know," "far out," and so on. We were disillusioned. How could anyone not have one single intelligent thing to say? How could anyone so attired, so groomed not have anything even mildly interesting to say?

After he left, I said to my wife, "I'm afraid it's the same old Lenny."

"Yes," she answered, "All he did was trade in the warm-up jacket for a funny robe."

At any other time, Lenny would have led a quite ordinary, humdrum existence. What the 60's did for him, and for countless clucks like him, was to make him seem (especially in his own eyes) glamorous by giving him conventionally "exotic" roles and speeches, costumes, and props. The Lennys of the 60's fancied that distinction was to be had by adopting the deportment, dress, language, and mental habits of a herd of similarly undistinguished clods grouped under the media banner of the "counterculture." That it did nothing for them except to inflate their pathetic egos at the expense of a sense of realism about themselves was its smallest injury. Far worse, for them and for the rest of us, was the way it sanctioned and encouraged, in the names of love, freedom, individuality, etc., the trivialization and finally the degradation of those precious concepts. No odium attached to him for quitting grad school or leaving his wife; on the contrary, this was "liberation," and those in the media (and their number was legion) who pondered the Lennys of the time took pride in casting aside reason, intelligence, realism, and the wisdom of experience to discover in these pitiable adolescent attitudes weighty lessons of the heart and mind for the edification of the rest of us benighted souls who failed to see the great messages being conveyed to us by "today's troubled youth."

If a comparison of Momo and Mike showed me how swiftly certain absurd radical poses were becoming conventional, I saw in Lenny the incredible dispersion among quite ordinary middle-class people of the same unspoken impulses and implicit ways of thought, however superficially diverse their immediate concerns. Looking back from the end of the 60's, from the advent of Lenny in his "Love" van, the pace of development in the decade was astonishing. It began, innocuously enough, with folks like the Woodwrights playing roles, with the help of a small admiring public, in flattering home movies of no great import. Within a few years, they were so numerous that magazines and publishing houses, founded wholly on Country Fakery, were flourishing. At the same time the hippie homesteaders seemed to jump out of the ground in their hordes. Why this? Why then? Why so sweeping and so rapid?

Although it is possible to trace the 60's all the way back to the Enlightenment (and even beyond), we will understand them well enough if we go back only a century to the era when iconoclastic cultural modernism, allied with political radicalism, was just beginning in the U.S. As the years passed and the ideas gradually gained adherents, they took on various forms and marched under different banners but always towards the same goal: a generalized idea of freedom that took specific shape as liberation from the constraints of convention. By the 1920's, cultural modernism, its prewar radicalism hardened and made more fanatic by the Bolshevik seizure of power, commanded the intellectual heights. From then on, all established practices or conventions were on the defensive, and as the years passed, their area of sovereignty shrank. The old ideas were drained of their lifeblood until they were only shells, nominal beliefs rattled now and then in their musty boxes to frighten the children. When modernism finally permeated the educated middle

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class in the late 1950's and early 60's, it had achieved a critical mass; conventional notions were simply blown away. (Remember the collapse of university administrations in the face of student revolts?) That explains the phenomenon of older people who were suddenly 60ed, who sported beards and sandals and love beads, and who doggedly whined that "the kids are trying to tell us something"; aging Lennys freed from ritual observance of conventions they had long ceased to believe in.

When we think of the 60's, not as the beginning of something but as the culmination of a long process of disintegration wrought by a radical cultural force, as the final triumph of that force, then it is apparent that the 60's are still working themselves into every nook and cranny of middle-class society, rooting out the last vestiges of decency, institutionalizing the rites of the new paganism. Probably not many of its adherents at any time thought of cultural modernism as the repeal of the Decalogue and the hard-won millennia of civilization that went with it, but so it is turning out. Nevertheless, there is hope: Remember that the 60's are an end, not a beginning, that the intellectual force of modernism was spent a long time ago (witness the barrenness in the arts), and that there is a growing realization of the terrible price we paid for our dubious freedom from the old conventions. The 60's are not dead, but the intellectual weapons that will finally lay them low are being forged today.

What motivated my 60's people was always the pipe dream of freedom from constraint, whether the chains took the form of farm work or monogamy or intellectual effort or democratic politics or anything at all. There would be a new heaven and a new earth and we would all be liberated as new beings. Which is why, to answer the question that seemed most puzzling to me at the beginning of this essay, nearly everyone cheered on the 60's people and no one deeply criticized them. It was not the startling transformations or the fog of phoniness or even the wish to believe that bemused observers and assured a protective press for the 60's, but an instinctive sense that all of us were somehow involved, implicated in a way that we could feel but not understand. And of course we were, because no one, willy-nilly, could escape some participation in the long process of cultural erosion that has been going on since before we were born. No matter how we judged the 60's or consciously thought of them at the time, we unconsciously welcomed them. They fulfilled the spirit of the age. We could not have wholeheartedly repudiated them—which would have meant a root and branch job—without repudiating ourselves. So we cheered them on or we acquiesced or we laughed or we criticized certain aspects of the 60's, and then we passed on and acted as if the decade was just another dusty item in the faintly ridiculous past, along with the Charleston, zoot suits, and antimacassars. We will never be able to confront the 60's successfully, as they exist now in our culture, until we reexamine cultural modernism and our relation to it—in other words, until we face the 60's ourselves.

The reaction to AIDS is a striking illustration of this point. Why is it that even the most obvious commonsense measures, once applied to other threats to public health (e.g., venereal disease), like the registration and reporting by doctors of all AIDS cases, cannot be done? To point to the homosexual lobby as the answer is inadequate, because then we must ask why the lobby is so powerful that it can suppress our sense of self-preservation. The homosexual movement is a foremost example of the drive for freedom from constraint, and AIDS is one of the consequences of uninhibited indulgence in that freedom. The outspoken apostles of cultural modernism, largely intellectuals and academics, will brook no interference with any of the consequences because they are afraid that the cause itself will then come under attack, threatening not merely the homosexual crusade but the entire movement of radical politics and cultural anarchism. But without the middle-class troops, the apostles are weak, and the troops, converted only in the last generation, are uneasy. Right now, they are taking only individual practical steps, i.e., doctors are being selective about their patients, friends agree to swap blood transfusions, and so on. Lacking understanding of how ideas work in society, they can only dimly see, or rather feel, that some dangerous notions are abroad today. That the ideas currently derive most of their tyrannic power from the fact that they are lodged in their own hearts and minds, and that the social despotism can be overthrown only when they begin to exorcise it from themselves, these thoughts are, as yet, far from their minds.

I would be remiss if I did not take note of what was certainly my country 60's people's greatest contribution to the era, the bringing together of nature worship and Marxism, a synthesis that is the apotheosis of 60's-ism. An unlikely yoking, one would think, but the two bodies of thought share a great deal of common ground. Both, for instance, are shot through with fantasies, superstitions, and fetishistic thinking, though laying claim to the strictest rationality. Modern nature worship, the apocalyptic environmentalism of the last 25 years, is well-known for its glib show of scientific evidence, while Marxism (as no one needs to be told) has always vehemently insisted on its scientific character. In both cases, however, this is cuckoo science, the product of ideological thinking, magical reasoning, full of symbols, talismans, and taboos. Furthermore, the nature worshipers look to Marxism as the means to achieve nature's ends (an idea that was not foreign to Marx, by the way). Since the reverse side of nature worship is hatred of the works of man, in particular "exploitive" man, Marxism, with the fierce power of its destructive animus, is very attractive to the nature worshipers, lured by the feeling that this is the force that will utterly crush capitalism and the corrupt world it has made, replacing it with a utopia so vague as to fit the pipe dreams of every Friend of the Earth. Marxism, it is fondly hoped, will put us under the aegis of nature, where all the artificial constraints (even perhaps human contingency itself) of so-called civilization will fall away.

Whenever I recall my country 60's, one symbolic figure comes to mind, a man who embodied not just the 60's but the long preparation, too, and whose later career is a perfect demonstration of the sweeping success of the 60's, as revealed in the happy stupefaction of the observers and admirers from the wider, supposedly saner, world. Scott Nearing was an early admirer of Stalin, later of Mao, and finally of Enver Hoxha. For a while he was a Communist,

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and he was always an ardent defender of it, never attempting to disguise his admiration of its most hideous aspects, like the slave labor camps, in his numerous books, pamphlets, and newsletter. When he moved to Vermont in the 1930's, he became an early Country Fake, publishing books on that, too. Throughout his career, as people who knew him and as his books amply testify, he was an insufferable, sanctimonious prig and charlatan whom even lefties couldn't stand. He was regarded, if he was noticed at all, as a quack and crank. Suddenly, however, with the advent of the 60's, his star began to rise; disciples made pilgrimages to see him, he was treated with obsequious respect everywhere, his every lie gullibly reported, his fatuous wisdom regarded with awe in magazines and newspapers across the land. When he died, at the age of 100 in 1983, the story was carried, reverentially, on the front page of the *New York Times*.

THE FIRST GREEN INTERNATIONAL

by Allan C. Carlson

Peasant agrarianism, some say, was Central Europe's "missed opportunity" for independent political development in this century. Such arguments have been heard particularly since 1947, as the refugees from Marxist Europe organized their International Peasant Union and met every other year to talk about what might have been. The case is compelling, to a degree. For while Europe's agrarian movement has been criticized for being both too diffuse as an ideology and too general as a political program to be effective, neither criticism really holds.

Without doubt, political agrarianism held a unique appeal for the rural masses of Central Europe. In part, the peasants were simply flattered by the unusual praise which the politician-philosophers showered on them. Rudolf Herceg of the Croatian Republican Peasant Party saw European farmers as the chosen people, the one natural social-economic entity that would bring an end to centuries of class conflict and the usurpation of power by minorities. Only the peasants, he said, could produce a society of true social justice, since they alone were a class without an interest in exploiting the labor of others. He even argued that the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the creation of the workers' state, was merely prelude to the final rebellion by the peasantry and the creation of a rural utopia.

There was, of course, a strong mystical aspect to the movement. The peasant's virtues, writers said, derived from his bond to the soil, the fertile mother of human behavior and community.

The theme-setting 1923 essay in *Mezinarodin Agrarni Bureau, Bulletin*, the new journal of the international peasant movement, emphasized agrarianism's "desire to renew and preserve humanity on the basis of the natural law which reigns between man and the soil." The farmer and his family were seen as the creative elements in the state, asking only for peace and the exercise of rights necessary to the task of righteous living. In exchange, the Bulletin stated, the farmer "gives society bread," "continuously creates values," and fills his life "with all the attainments of human progress, of science, of art, and . . . of civilization." The article concluded with an emphasis on world peace: "We are convinced that the victory of agrarianism will be the victory of humanitarianism, of justice, of peace. Humanity, desiring peace, should place its future in the hands of those for whom peace is the first condition of life, that is to say, in the hands of the farmer."

True, this peasant ideology also had its dark side, expressed most completely in the theorizing of Alexander Stamboliiski, chief of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union. Using near apocalyptic terminology, foreshadowing both Mao Tse-tung and Pol Pot, Stamboliiski saw the city as dominated by a predatory spirit: Run by parasites such as bankers and lawyers, the city lived by sucking the blood of honest country folk and an almost enslaved urban proletariat. The true struggle in the modern world, Stamboliiski claimed, was between rural and urban cultures, which were incapable of coexistence. Only the peasant political movement, motivated by the communal spirit, could, in his view, restore society to a decent wholeness; through violence and coercion, if necessary. The least attractive side of agrarian populism links it with the development of fascism, particularly in its emphasis on a "mystical bond" between man and soil, its perception of the Jew as the middleman, and its attempt to mobilize the peasants into a violent, anti-Marxist movement.

In its calmer mood, the peasant movement offered a fairly consistent policy program. Its central feature was a strong endorsement of private property, tied to land reform that would redistribute to bona fide peasants the hectares still held in great estates. The movement also wanted governments to lower tariffs, support cooperatives that would eliminate the notorious middlemen, provide social insurance, subsidize agricultural research, and establish agronomy stations in the countryside that would disseminate new technical knowledge. In practical terms, the parties looked to Switzerland and Denmark as examples of modern societies with significant, viable communities of small farmers.

If we confine our attention to the Bulgarian experience, the agrarian movement made some gains. In 1919, following the debacle and antipeasant terror of Béla Kun's Hungary, Stamboliiski's Agrarian Union used both the Communist issue and rhetoric about "urban parasites" to win the largest proportion of seats in the *Subranie*. Over the next four years, the Party's paramilitary Orange Guard was loosed on political opponents, with beatings and the disruption of antipeasant meetings common. Through a rigged

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election law, the Agrarian Union won 212 of 245 parliamentary seats in April 1923 and was on the verge of establishing a revolutionary peasant dictatorship. However, a military coup occurred in June, and Macedonian nationalist opponents captured Stamboliiski (an internationalist and friend of Dragoljub Jovanovic, head of Serbian Agrarians) and cut off his head.

In its early years the International Agrarian Bureau in Prague—the center of the emerging "Green International"—had a Pan-Slavic "racial" emphasis. Some leaders also emphasized the peasant parties' place as a "third force," the alternative to both decadent bourgeois liberalism and Bolshevism, a claim with distinct fascist echoes. That, however, did not prevent many of them (Stjepan Radic, of the Croatian Peasants' Party, or Serb Dragoljub Jovanovic) from contacting Moscow, in search of cooperative action.

After 1925, though, the Green International abandoned specific ethnic identity and antidemocratic sentiments and gave emphasis to the regenerative power of peasant democracy. While the Bureau's central authority remained weak, its appeal broadened and a new array of peasant parties entered the fold. By 1929, member parties were from Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Latvia, France, Lithuania, Poland, and Austria. Representing a movement stretching "from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea, from the Arctic Ocean to the Aegean," the Green International laid claim to being "a new force . . . in the field of social reform, an enormous but powerful force, desiring only the peaceful development of peoples, strengthening the foundations of society—the agricultural population."

If anything, the movement probably suffered from an excess of democracy. (Stjepan Radic, the charismatic Croat, so filibustered the Yugoslav parliament that he was shot in 1928 by an opponent, thus forcing King Alexander to introduce a military dictatorship.) Like their cousin agrarians in America, the European "Greens" believed that peasants were "natural democrats," whose simple wisdom would be best projected through the most democratic of processes. For this reason, the Greens regularly endorsed the extensive use of the plebiscite, the recall, and the referendum.

Despite this popular strength, consistent policy program, and democratic orientation, some still doubt that the European agrarians could have sustained large communities of family farms filled with good, virtuous people, neither liberal nor Red. George Jackson Jr., the foremost American historian of the peasant movement, notes that while the Greens did hold a number of ministries in coalition governments during the 1920's, their only experience in one-party rule—Bulgaria—proved disastrous. He lays blame, in part, on the personal weaknesses of the agrarian leaders, their inexperience, their thirst for the trappings of power, and their frequent lack of vision. Jackson also cites the complete failure of the Greens to survive their first economic and political crisis. As the Eastern European democracies withered after 1929, the parties generally proved unable to rally the peasantry for any political action other than voting. Unlike the Comintern in Moscow which controlled Communist parties in other lands, the Green International in Prague had no real power and proved unable to coordinate a response to new challenges.

More broadly, the peasant parties never confronted their real dilemma: how to be both modern and peasant. In the interwar period, Central and Eastern European farms were "overpopulated," even by fairly rustic technological standards. In some countries, a near majority of the farms were too small to sustain a family. "Green" plans for the rural economy included subsidized research and the introduction of modern farming techniques, actions that could only aggravate the demographic situation and result in still greater migration from farm to city. It is clear that extensive "rationalization" of these rural economies was inevitable, if they were to compete with capital-intensive farms on the international market. It would have taken a combination of high agricultural tariffs, heavy governmental subsidy, strict laws discouraging land sales and farm consolidation, and direct or indirect constraints on power equipment and other new technologies to keep the European flatlands predominantly peasant. These proposals were not on the Green agenda in 1929 and probably would not have commanded much popular support. By 1933, in any case, it was too late.

If the peasant parties had survived in democracies, it may have been on the less inspirational model of Sweden's *bondeförbundet*, or Farmer's Party. Officially aloof from the Green movement in the 1920's, the party avoided most aspects of peasant mysticism and instead acted as an interest group. It was always available as a coalition partner for the right deal: price supports for farm products. In this guise, the Farmer's Party joined as a junior partner with the Social Democrats in the 1930's and again in the 1950's, helping the SD gain power and achieving many of the goals sought by continental European agrarians.

Ironically, it was the Red Army which created conditions that allowed some aspects of the European peasant mentality to survive into our time: an antimodernity engendered by political protest and by the inefficiency of the central planners and the technological incompetence of socialism. From Estonia to Albania, peasants still till the soil in primitive ways and sustain a degraded folk culture amidst "scientific socialism."

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In the West, we see a new "Green International," the partisans of which talk about nature and farms but embrace instead a new sort of radical politics: part feminist, part anarchist, and wholly destructive of authentic tradition. It is a poor legacy for a once honorable, if unfulfilled, political label that sought to preserve man's relationship to God, country, soil, and soul.

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Jefferson, New and Improved *by Clyde Wilson*

"I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just."

—Thomas Jefferson

In Pursuit of Reason: The Life of Thomas Jefferson **by Noble E. Cunningham Jr., Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press; $24.95.**

With the exception of the driven and depressed Lincoln, no major figure in American history is, in the final analysis, more enigmatic than Jefferson. Without any exception, none is more complex. There is more to the enigma and complexity than a multitude of facets—political leader, botanist, architect, linguist, ethnographer, musician, man of letters, and much else. (If he had never held a public office, Jefferson's correspondence would still be one of the most valuable treasures of his era.) But behind these varied roles was a mind of a very high order, with deep and complicated reserves, yet covered by an impenetrable mask of everyday balance and harmony that was more than sufficient for the highest worldly success without beginning to exhaust its capacity or reveal its real nature. In many respects, the enigma of Jefferson, delightfully hinted at in Albert Jay Nock's early-20th-century biography, is similar to that of his contemporary, Goethe, and likewise will remain forever inaccessible to those of us who do not enjoy the mental and moral gifts of nature in such abundance.

But we do not really need to understand the whole personality to grasp the significance of Jefferson's career as a public man in the founding years of the American republic, and this new biography is concerned chiefly with the career of the public man. There was no mystery at all in what Jefferson stood for in the American political scene. This was clearly understood in his time and for a generation or two

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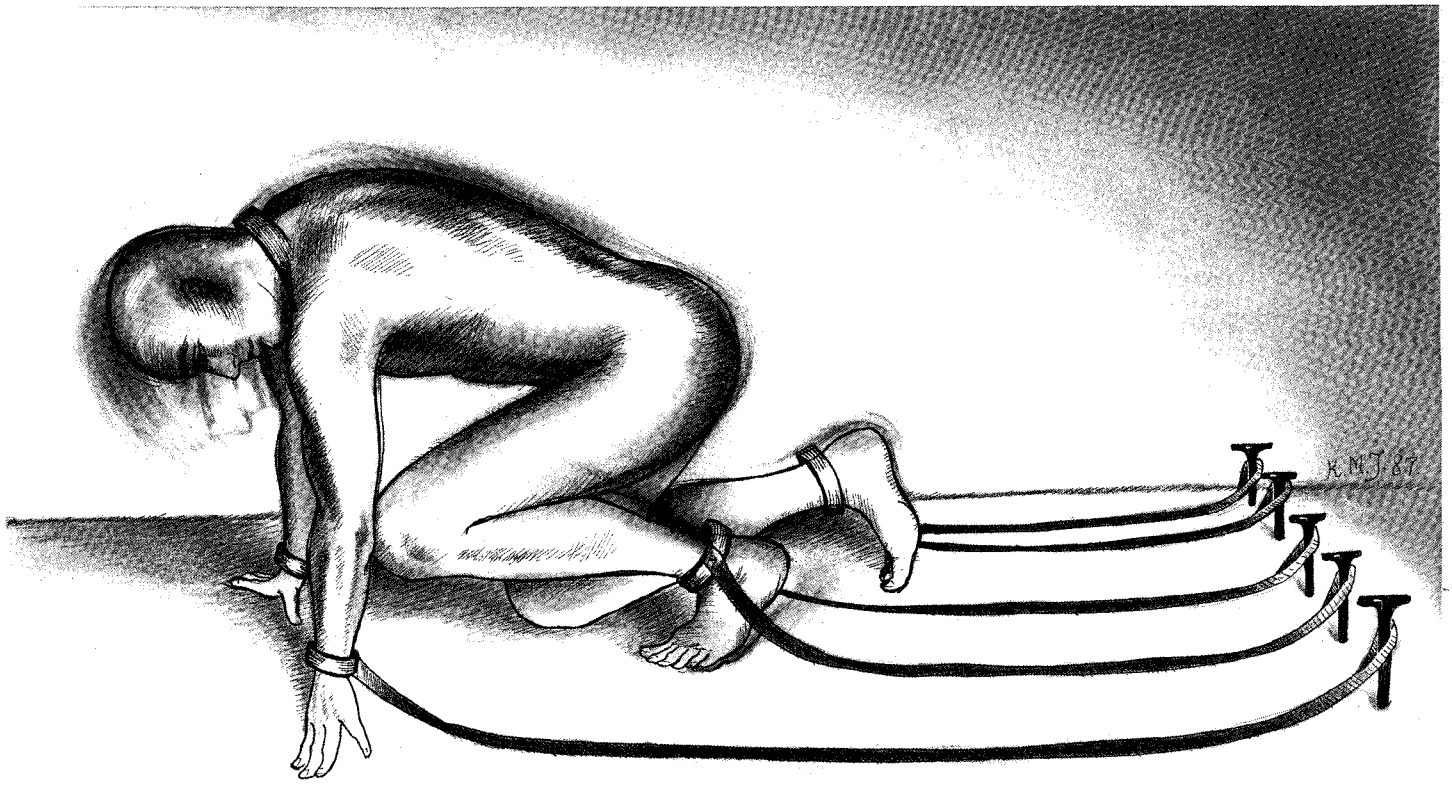

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thereafter by both his friends and his enemies. But, while there is no mystery, there is a great deal of confusion, arising out of subsequent efforts to manipulate his image as an aegis for other causes of other days. Even had he not been so complex a puzzle as a man, his role in American history is so covered by ideological debris that reality can only be uncovered inch by inch. (Merrill D. Peterson's tour de force, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, 1960, showed the many and contradictory uses to which he has been put.) In fact, the multivarious misunderstandings of Jefferson's political career tell us little about him. They tell us a great deal about the fragmentation, shallowness, and image-mongering that characterized American political and intellectual life after his time, a degeneration which he observed in his last years.

Jefferson had a chivalric and optimistic faith that the intelligence and patriotism of his fellow American freeholders (outside of Massachusetts and Connecticut) were such that they could be trusted to rule themselves. It followed that a free republican government was the proper form of government for Americans and that this government should interfere in their private affairs and pick their pockets as little as was consistent with public order and national independence. Unlike persons in the 19th century and since who seized upon and universalized a few words in the Declaration of Independence, he did not insist that liberty and republicanism were appropriate to every people, condition, and time. The element of messianic democratic universalism that came to characterize the American approach to the world was a product of a later time and was a devolved expression of that New England Puritanism which Jefferson despised, and which hated him.

To Jefferson and his friends, his victory and theirs in 1800 meant simply that they had established his view (which was not something he invented and promulgated from on high as a divine lawgiver, but something that arose naturally out of American conditions) as predominant. Yet by the time he died, in John Quincy Adams' would-be activist presidency, Jefferson well knew that his victory had been temporary.

The LSU Press has inaugurated a new series of Southern biographies, of which this is an early entry. The goal is a readable one-volume treatment, based upon accumulated scholarship and reflection, but aimed, apparently, at general readers. Given the alienation between historical scholarship and the reading public (if such a thing still exists), this is laudable. But it is hard to imagine a more difficult subject to take on in this way than Jefferson. There are many good specialized studies of particular aspects of Jefferson and room for many more, but it is no easy matter to boil him down to one smooth volume. The author sought to bypass all the accretions of confusion and to see Jefferson afresh, while admitting that he presents only his own view of a complicated subject. This is probably the proper strategy for the occasion, but perhaps unavoidably, it can succeed only at the cost of either distortion or blandness, in this case the latter. This is, in a way, a redundant book, though responsibly and gracefully written. Did I desire a readable and up-to-date one-volume life of Jefferson, I would hire the most skilled available editor to condense Dumas Malone's six volumes, which are as close to definitive as history can ever be. The book in hand fills a formal requirement, without adding anything either factual or interpretive to the world's body of knowledge.

Cunningham hoped to see Jefferson afresh and thus sought to reduce his life to a clear and manageable theme—his faith in reason in the affairs of man. Here I must part company with the author. While the observation is true, it is so general as to be nearly meaningless or, what is worse, lends itself to too many misrepresentations. Almost all the errors and confusions about Jefferson result from using his faith in man's reasonableness to provide an endorsement for any later movement which appealed to reason, no matter how different in spirit, in tacit assumptions, in social context, in intellectual fabric from Jefferson's own. Alexander Hamilton also believed in reason, but he drew rather different conclusions about its proper use. One would never gather from Cunningham's mild consensus history that the gentlemen's disagreement between the two reasoners was marked by violent sectional, ideological, and economic conflicts that reverberate to this day.

To put it another way, the theme of reason tells us little about the blood, sweat, and tears of Jefferson's politics—or those of his enemies. This is not only a political biography but also, alas, a superficial one. It is a verbal icon, a printed and bound version of the New Deal-era monument in Washington which could make Jefferson palatable to 20th-century Americans only by doctoring his quotation about slavery. This is not Malone's Jefferson, though it bears a resemblance to a fragment of that portrait. It is not Nock's or Parrington's or Bowers' or Peterson's or that of many others that could be named. It is George Bancroft's Jefferson. Bancroft was a clever New England scribbler of the 19th century who, unable to defeat Jefferson, took a narrow slice of him and created a putative whole that he found compatible; subsequent generations have responded sympathetically. Exactly the same thing happened more recently when George Will and others converted Ronald Reagan, at one time a wild man from the West and potential threat to the Establishment, into just another Republican, tolerable if not beloved in Boston and Hartford.

After the violent twist of American society away from his dispensation in the later 19th century, Jefferson can be made to fit consensus history only by a good deal of selective emphasis. Cunningham thus follows the standard interpretation that Jefferson's allegiance to states' rights was merely a temporary expedient, adopted for the occasion, for the larger goal of the defense of civil liberties. But this is unhistorical. In his own time and several generations later, the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798, affirming state sovereignty, were the core of his political position. (Here we run into the mystification heaped up by the cleverly vengeful industry of several generations of Adamses, who convinced most later observers that Jefferson's presidency was a contradiction of his earlier position. It was not so seen by most at the time or for many decades following.)

The real Jefferson, by modern interpretation, put freedom ahead of states' rights. This is to indulge in a too-easy

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make-over of Jefferson to please ourselves and to miss the main point, which is that for Jefferson — and his followers — the two were synonymous and inextricable. It is self-evident in the historical record for those who have eyes to see, obvious to anyone who will read Jefferson's correspondence through from the 1790's to the 1820's or who will examine the context — the understanding of what his career meant to his supporters in his own time. And it is only thus that we can resolve what many 20th-century commentators have seen as a contradiction in Jefferson — the theoretical advocate of freedom who engaged on other occasions in what an ACLU technician would regard as acts hostile to civil liberties. But there is no contradiction between the Jefferson who invoked state sovereignty against the federal sedition law and the Jefferson who approved Virginia's summary execution of a Tory marauder. The contradiction is in the eye of the beholder who attributes to Jefferson a set of assumptions which were not his own. From the point of view of state sovereignty, the two positions are perfectly consistent and democratic. In his role as a public man he trusted Virginia, and her sister and daughter states, to exercise power responsibly when necessary without permanent danger to liberty. (He had his doubts about greedy and self-righteous New Englanders and certain other Americans who were too impressed by Old World arrangements of authority or who had too many plots and plans for the use of public power.) Late in life, when he was no longer an active politician, Jefferson explicitly recommended the use of state interposition against unconstitutional internal improvements legislation — not a question of civil liberties and exactly what was forwarded a very few short years later by Calhoun against the tariff.

Nothing could be more wildly irrelevant to Jefferson's position — that liberty was best preserved by protecting the free American social fabric from the federal government, with such exercises of power as were unavoidable left to the wisdom of the people of the states — than that of the modern civil libertarian that freedom is something granted by the federal Bill of Rights after being wrested away from an untrustworthy state majority. In fact, Jefferson's view would still work: could we restore real federalism and limit the central government to war, diplomacy, and a few other necessary common functions, we could come as close as possible in an imperfect world to settling our major social problems. There is, in fact, no other possible solution for abortion, rampant crime, deteriorating education, and many other evils than a reassumption of power close to the people. It is true we would lose Massachusetts and a few other states of the Deep North, as Jefferson always did, but most of the states would govern themselves "reasonably," could they decide without interference. But this will never happen, not because of any defect in the Constitution but because of defects in the national character. It would not in the least have surprised Jefferson that a people who are no longer a nation of independent and public-spirited freeholders but a mass of consumers leavened by an occasional busybody reformer would have difficulty in governing themselves "by reason."

Here we must admit that Jefferson's was a creative and speculative intellect, which bruited a great many ideas in a great many forms to a great many people. Polite and imaginative and fond of discussion, he often adapted himself to his correspondent in a speculative vein, leaving the literal-minded with the impression that he agreed with them. But Jefferson always perfectly understood the difference between theoretical speculation and the real world of American freeholders, and as a public man he was eminently practical and consensus-oriented, as Alexander Hamilton discerned when he refused to countenance the efforts of his fellow Federalists to steal the election of 1800 for the charming scoundrel Burr. Jefferson was, as we said, a complex man. The failure to distinguish between the philosopher and the political leader has led some to regard him as inconsistent or hypocritical and others to take his theoretical projections as literal policy prescriptions. But there is really no problem if one takes care to understand the context of a quotation. Contrary to later assumptions, it was not Jefferson the philosophe who was revered and followed by his contemporaries and a majority of several succeeding generations but Jefferson the sane and balanced public man, not the author of "All Men Are Created Equal" but the republican gentleman who had averted Federalist usurpation. Cunningham presents not this latter Jefferson but rather that partial one who was pleasing to international philosophes and to the more belated and lukewarm of his supporters.

Jefferson's views on slavery, or rather the reaction to them by 20th-century intellectuals, or the 20th-century public for that matter, provide a fascinating case study in emotional avoidance of simple and obvious historical facts, in the great lengths that people will go to rationalize fantasies that they find comfortable. Cunningham's approach is, again, the conventional one, to emphasize Jefferson's antislavery sentiments, which, unfortunately, came to little. The whole story is less comforting to those who insist that figures of the past be like them. There is, indeed, a certain childish willfulness in the American mind that insists on chastising persons of other ages for not being like them, or else pretending that they were. Which is a certain way *not* to learn anything from history.

As to slavery, Jefferson was born into the higher ranks of a social system that long had been, was, and would long continue to be committed to it. He believed, as did many others, and often said, that on balance the situation was deleterious to the commonwealth and it ought to be done away with, *if* this were possible without damage to other values and interests. His speculations on the nature and relations of the races were deeper, but not much different in conclusions than those of his neighbors and most other Americans of his time.

He was, like his neighbors, committed to keeping the issue in the control of those whose concern it was. His famous letter (to John Holmes) during the Missouri controversy ("We have a wolf by the ears") has been repeatedly misrepresented by those who prefer ideological fantasy to accurate history. What is usually emphasized about the letter is that Jefferson was still committed to his antislavery sentiments, which is true but a misemphasis. In this letter,

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very clearly (and in many other statements at the same time), Jefferson was not pointing to the evils of slavery — he was pointing to the evils of antislavery, of free-soilism.

The letter is written to console a northerner in trouble with his constituents for favoring the compromise — that is, for favoring the admission of Missouri as a slave state. It is not slavery that Jefferson fears as "the death knell of the Union," it is antislavery, the notion that has been raised for the first time that Congress could tamper with the institutions of new states as a condition for admission. Looked at over the whole career and not sugar-coated and spiffed up to meet 20th-century standards, that is to say, viewed historically, Jefferson's views are easily understood and did not differ, except for being more detached in tone (as befitted an elder statesman), from those of most other Southerners of that time and later, including the leaders of the Confederacy. Those views were the exact opposite of, and hostile to, the Free-Soilers of the mid-19th century who claimed him as patron saint. Like all Southerners, Jefferson was unwilling to entertain outside interference.

That we have so nearly lost touch with Jefferson is nowhere better indicated than in his being claimed as the father of modern public education. Jefferson proposed for Virginia a system of public education, never fully implemented, designed not to supplant private education but to supplement it. His main concern beyond making rudimentary learning widely available was to rescue those gifted young men who appeared from time to time in the lower orders of society. He would provide them with the means and the opportunity, in a vigorously competitive and elitist setting, to progress into the aristocracy so that their talents would not be lost to themselves and to society. (The rich would, of course, see to their own success.) Nothing could be further from Jefferson's plan than the programmatic use of the

REVISIONS

Tithonus in Manhattan

Going back to nature has been the theme of moral philosophers at least since the time of Montaigne; to some extent, "living according to nature" must be a natural conception, since it was an essential principle of philosophies as widely separated as Stoicism and Taoism. What is remarkable is how few such moralists ever paid much attention to nature — not the Stoics, not Laotse, and certainly not Montaigne. What they had in mind were certain a priori principles, which they applied to human circumstances.

There have been exceptions, of course. Aristotle was a keen biological thinker, and the 18th-century Scottish jurist Lord Kames once proposed the beasts as a parallel for human social life. But it has really only been since Darwin that scientists and philosophers have systematically attempted to grapple with the human condition biologically. The most famous such attempt still remains Konrad Lorenz's *On Aggression* — a widely misunderstood little book. In it, Lorenz (a distinguished student of animal behavior) looked at the intersection of our natural instincts and social institutions and concluded that since man's unaggressive nature did not provide the necessary mechanisms for regulating violent behavior, these had to be supplied by various cultural mechanisms. In his latest book, *The Waning of Humanness* (translated from German by R.W. Kickert, Boston: Little Brown), Lorenz is covering familiar territory: man's plight in a world of his own creation, a world that turns his healthiest instincts into liabilities.

Lorenz utterly rejects the idea that evolution has any plan or even direction; at the same time, he insists upon the value distinction between higher and lower, i.e., between species that have a richer or poorer ability to process and utilize information from their environment. Our natural aversion to parasites is justified, he argues, because the parasite gives up not only its independent locomotion but much of its sensory and intellectual capacity. Parasitism is only one type of dead end; domestication represents another. It is no accident that we find the wild turkey a magnificent and noble creature, while the domesticated creature is foolish and degraded. (The exceptions are the domestic horse — which in appearance has greater nobility than his wild counterparts — and the dog, whose character now displays such higher human traits as loyalty and self-sacrifice.)

If species can become decadent, so can cultures, if they evolve in directions that diminish the autonomy of their members. Under what Lorenz calls "the technocratic system," that is the fate of modern man whose every problem is solved for him and whose faith is placed in the idols of pseudodemocracy — human equality and plasticity of human nature: "The belief in the unlimited plasticity of humans is naturally most welcome to all those people for whom it would be advantageous if the human possessed no inborn abilities and capacities and would, thus, be unlimitedly manipulatable. This explains why the pseudodemocratic doctrine that all men are equal, by which is believed that all humans are initially alike and pliable, could be made into a state religion by both the lobbyists for large industry and by the ideologues of communism."

There are weaknesses in Lorenz's case: on the metaphysical problem of value in an evolutionist's world, he can do no better than the commonsense observation that the human universe depends on values; on the future, Lorenz places his optimistic hopes on the shoulders of the young, while at the same time acknowledging that the youthful rejection of tradition is itself a main symptom in the "waning of humanness." It is, nonetheless, an important book, full of wonderful insights.

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schools as an arm of the state to rearrange society (though he did favor a necessary orthodoxy of political teaching in support of republicanism which our civil libertarians, committed to leftist revolution, will not allow).

Our public school system was built upon a Massachusetts-Prussian model that proceeded from the beginning with nearly opposite goals. Its purpose was to provide not leaders but a docile work force and conformist citizenry. Possibly this goal was even a good one given the conditions of the later 19th century, but it was not Jefferson's. Jefferson, defender of the aristocracy of talents against the aristocracy of privilege, would find anathema, I believe, a school system which expends vast resources in the hope of making marginal improvements in the minds of the dull-witted, while neglecting, demoralizing, and alienating the talented. (The main function of American public education is to make sure that the talented poor do not get a good education and are not able to rise and compete with the class that can afford private schooling, a class noted for its sterling verbal commitment to egalitarian public education.)

This brief sketch, I believe, captures something of the essential Jefferson. But, of course, history is many things and serves many purposes, and its fascination lies just in the fact that it is not and never can be definitive. Professor Cunningham has enjoyed a pleasant and prestigious appointment, by no means a sinecure, to provide a new account of Jefferson's life in relatively short compass. If one wants a reliable, factual, well-written overview of the life of Jefferson the public man, in some but not too great detail, then this book will serve the purpose. It is a pleasant but not very invigorating diversion for those who like their American history as untroubled as possible. And I have no doubt that a great many more readers will prefer Cunningham's filtertip cigarette to the pungent but authentic plug of old Virginia bright leaf that I have proffered above.

Sterile Prairie *by Wayne Michael Sarf*

"Look how wide also the east is from the west: so far hath he set our sins from us."

—Psalm 103

The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization 1800-1900 **by Richard Slotkin, New York: Atheneum; $37.50.**

It has been said that an intellectual is someone who can listen to the William Tell Overture without thinking of the Lone Ranger. But the life of the mind hardly requires that William and Henry, rather than Frank and Jesse, first spring to mind should "the James brothers" be mentioned; nor is it inconsistent with "popular" culture or such "romantic" Western subjects as Indian warfare or frontier crime. Resisting seduction by frontier fantasies, scholars may choose instead to dissect them, tracing the transmutation of history into myth and flawed humans into America's frontier pantheon. Others may adopt a sociological approach to frontier society, though their efforts may fail to evoke a deeper Truth; recently in these pages Odie B. Faulk, galvanized by two books he considered "larded with sociological and psychological jargon and motivated by economic prejudice against the entrepreneur," insisted that *he* had gained more insight into the cattle trade from two cowboy anecdotes than from "some two dozen years of academic study."

The defiant opposite to a homely brush-popper's yarn might be a probing of Western myths and "ideology" that largely neglects the actual West in the consciousness of the dudes—those who helped hammer out for us an enduring frontier of the mind. Richard Slotkin's *The Fatal Environment* excavates its "Myth of the Frontier" chiefly from the writings of Easterners, from an era when the frontier was known to be, with a ghastly finality, vanishing.

"Men live by lies," proclaimed D.H. Lawrence, brooding over Cooper's Leatherstocking cycle. And so with nations. Our Old West—our Frontier—is a young nation's closest approach to a Heroic Age, to be alternately glamorized or debunked as pride or guilt takes us, its tragedy and drama famous beyond our shores. Small wonder that despite an abundance of honest and entertaining nonfiction writers, bad "historians," catering to Wild West dementia, often seem to drive out the good—an irony summed up by anthropologist John Greenway's comment that Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* "is the most popular book on the Indians ever written. It is also the worst."

Yet there seems scant agreement on the Western "myth." Does it celebrate rugged self-reliance, or violent "gun culture"? Are its Indians beasts, or does "natural" virtue hold a reproachful mirror to civilized vice? Do we welcome its passing—the arrival of schoolmarms and temperance societies—or mourn an ever-receding anarchy of ring-tailed squealers and eye-gouging brawlers? Perhaps all answers are correct, the myth, like Western film and fiction, being a catchall in which any fancy or folly can be indulged.

But for Richard Slotkin, here as in his 1973 *Regeneration Through Violence*, the "Myth of the Frontier" is arbitrarily boiled down to a theme of Indian or "savage" warfare, a confrontation which for generations of Americans had become "the symbolic key to interpreting the meaning of history." Acknowledging that many never adopted this myth, Slotkin asserts that it provided the terms in which General George A. Custer's contemporaries understood his 1876 defeat by Sioux and Cheyenne warriors—and also that these terms "continue to shape

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cultural discourse." But his tiresome comments on Vietnam/Indian similes and supposedly myth-influenced U.S. adventurism (Kennedy's New Frontier is implausibly termed "a program of renewed economic expansion and forward movement on the borders of the American empire") prove less relevant to his central theme than an analysis of Walt Whitman's "From Far Dakota's Canyons," a "Death-Sonnet for Custer," whose jaded narrator finds in a message of massacre an affirmation of the "loftiest of life upheld by death."

> The Indian ambuscade, the
> craft, the fatal environment,
> The cavalry companies fighting
> to the last in sternest
> heroism . . .

Conceding that "fatal environment" refers literally to Custer being surrounded and killed by Indians, Slotkin insists that it also suggests "a grand fable of national redemption, and Christian self-sacrifice," with the outcome "somehow implicit in the environment . . . as if Nature or God composed the story and assigned its meanings. . . . An environment, a landscape, a historical sequence is infused with meaning . . . which converts landscape to symbol and temporal sequence into 'doom'—a fable of necessary and fated actions." Whitman probably meant nothing of the kind, even his frontier locale being secondary to a grander theme of bracing heroism.

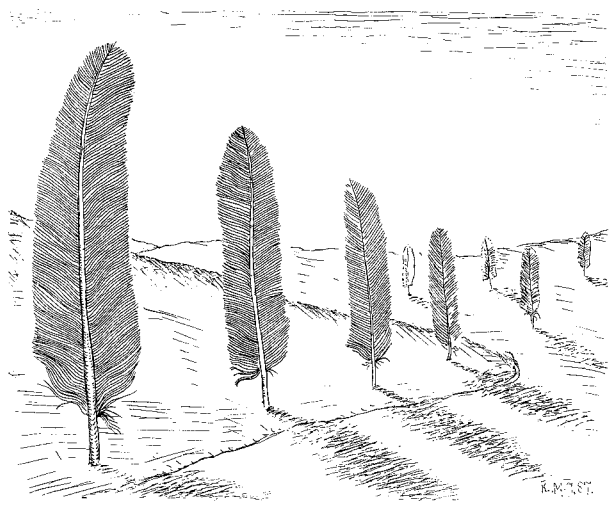
Slotkin introduces his themes with the Centennial Exposition, which celebrated America's near-miraculous growth and was shadowed by the news of Custer's annihilation. Slotkin sees an Exposition designed to show the superiority of the "American experiment," with a child and singing blacks declaring that *here* "industrial progress was not in conflict with humane values . . . did not lead to class hatred and oppression." But Slotkin finds the imagery "a mask, the oratory hollow," the pageant's "corrosively ironic context" actually being economic depression and Grant-era corruption.

The dilemma of inequality in a nation based on republican principles engendered a Marx-flavored thesis that inevitable ideological "contradictions" belied fantasies of the frontier as a permanent "safety valve," either for the landless poor or for slaveowners seeking to expand slavery farther west—or south, into Latin America. Apparently forgetting his history-as-Indian-war theme, Slotkin even redefines the myth's "central tenet" as the theory that economies and societies must grow or violently perish. The "central illusion" of this theory was faith in Western resources vast enough to satisfy industry while providing amply for each individual. Denying access to new lands, Slotkin argues, would have upset America's "peculiar balance" of aristocracy and democracy with the "frustrated rage of masses doomed to eventual disappointment in their quest for upward mobility. How were the lower orders to be placated, without the carrot of expansion held before their eyes as an inducement to submit?"

Analyzing early fictional stock figures such as the obsessed Indian hater ("simply writ large" in Melville's Ahab), Slotkin sees Fenimore Cooper's influence everywhere. He also scrutinizes historical heroes. Daniel Boone, the preindustrial archetype of *Regeneration Through Violence*, is succeeded by Kit Carson and the Texas demigods Crockett and Houston, the central theme of the latter two "legends" being self-renewal sought after "moral or material ruin" in Metropolitan struggles. Sam Houston, fleeing to the Cherokees, partly imitates Cooper's "natural aristocrat" ideal, but his rocky marriage "suggests some fundamental incompatibility in the mixture: a bride/civilization too enervated by gentility . . . a hero too much the man of the wilderness to blend his nature with that of civilization's highest type." One could almost forget there was a real Houston (and Mrs. Houston), whatever Sam's success in having "brought off" his "living or acting out" of a Leatherstocking "scenario."

Slotkin sees the "Last Stand" as the chief fable in industrial America's "Myth of the Frontier." He finds in Custer's 1874 exploration of the gold-rich, Sioux-claimed Black Hills of the Dakotas—dreamed of as a kind of Last Frontier and economic safety-valve for the "Panic of '73"—the "best case" for studying the "interaction of western realities and Metropolitan ideologies" and a "contradiction at the heart of liberal ideology: the imperatives of industrial development versus those of social justice or reform." Using the atypical New York *World* as an "index" of conservative ideology (and making the "myth" seem chiefly the *World*'s plaything by generally ignoring more moderate newspapers), he views editor as *auteur* in juxtaposing features and editorials. (Postbellum newspapers frequently compared Indians to striking workers or other dissidents, and the *World*, favoring the Hills' seizure, "consistently" paired reports of labor agitation and tribal unrest.)

Devoting much space to Custer's upbringing and private life in studying his public myth, Slotkin rejects the determinist view that a similar doomed hero would have been "invented" had Custer not died at the Little Big Horn. He ponders Bruce Rosenberg's theory that such defeat acquire a familiar "Last Stand" pattern through a collective, largely *unconscious* process and insists that glorifiers of Custer saw in man and massacre "realizations of the myths in which they believed." Shrewdly upsetting Custer-as-rebel fantasies ("an early type of organization man, hiding in the costume of the cavalier trooper and the Frontier buckskin"), he indulges wildly in pretentious amateur psychobabble: citing "Long Hair's feminine characteristics," he claims that Custer enjoyed the adjective's "implications of sensual attractiveness" and an "ambivalent linkage" with his half-sister Lydia. Journalists of 1865 would be shocked at what he finds in their hasty scribblings on a trivial incident in which



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Custer, at the Grand Review of victorious Union armies, mastered a runaway horse. Dubbing this critter a "surrogate for the man's animal self," Slotkin suggests that "Thus brought again under strict discipline by the rider (the intellectual being), the presence of the hero reveals itself." But then, only Slotkin would assume that in a magazine article by Custer he "solicits the aid of Delaware Indian scouts (Cooper's favorite tribe)" in keeping with a Leatherstocking-like self-image.

Custer was, of course, ambitious. But Slotkin imagines a hero *always* the opportunist, facade always "on." Cold-blooded calculation is insisted upon even in stating (wrongly) that the Custers were "childless by choice," or that Custer endorsed Negro suffrage before a Congressional committee while privately condemning it, though his actual testimony records no such endorsement. The reduction of a complex man to a two-legged calculating machine climaxes in denying Custer ability to reveal his true feelings (if any) even in writing to his own wife about Indians raping a little girl. Slotkin concludes: "This is of course the archetypal raison d'etre of the Indian war, and Custer responds appropriately: 'Woe to them if I overtake them.'" A more levelheaded writer might assume that the fiery Custer desired retribution.

While fair-mindedly terming Custer one of our Army's best Indian fighters, discounting silly stories of alleged presidential ambitions, and exploding his buffoonish modern image (the Montana disaster "retroactively discredits his professionalism"), Slotkin repeats several hoary fables. He writes of Custer's supposed cohabitation with a female Cheyenne captive. (It would be interesting to find out whether similar liaisons of Seventh Cavalry officers with Cheyenne women involved coercion, as Slotkin believes, or simple sexual collaboration with the white enemy.) Higher standards of evidence might also have benefited his interesting thoughts on Custer's "hunger for cash" and "rather flexible" Gilded Age business ethics. He even tries to establish Custer as the railways' tool, partly by charging him with plagiarism from a Northern Pacific propaganda brochure — though the two paragraphs he quotes have virtually nothing in common.

In the book's final section, "The Last Stand as Ideological Object, 1876-1900," Slotkin credits the newsmen of Custer's day with some awareness that the Little Big Horn "would become a 'legend,'" because in writing about it they used "the full range of legendary references and metaphors, from the Trojan War to Horatius at the Bridge, to the Alamo and the Charge of the Light Brigade." (Considering the inability of modern electronic reporters to come up with anything deeper than the usual "It was like something out of a spy movie," Slotkin's misconceptions are explicable, if not pardonable.) The Last Stand, though an ill-wrought fable in an age of rapid but irregular communications, became an "exercise in applied mythology" for a generation painfully aware of the final death of the Frontier. Custer became cast as civilization's martyr, while his foes achieved status as mythic savages. The Indians' stunning success actually inspired demands for "extermination" — though, as the author observes early on, the more such rhetoric was broadcast, the less killing seemed to get done. Of course, the Custer "legend" is capable of assuming many shapes, and we may doubt not only the author's assertion that the "Boy General" had achieved "mythic" status even *prior* to his death but also the importance assigned to Custer as an element of scholars' race-war myth.

Aware that his "Myth of the Frontier" is but part of the mythic West, Slotkin ignores certain well-known legends (such as those of outlaw-heroes or lawmen) as well as many familiar modern fantasies (though his *Gunfighter Nation* promises to carry his trilogy's "myth" into our own era). Instead, he provides neglected information and a fascinating thesis which may permanently alter, or at least stimulate, the reader's thinking on Westward expansion. Yet an academic sterility hangs over it — a coldness that does little justice to frontier, frontiersmen, or even Eastern stay-at-homes. The West, and America itself, seem barren places, and we are left, intentionally or not, with crass racialism, greed, paternalism, and "contradictions." It is hard to help feeling there was more — if only that hard-bitten love of individual liberty we associate with the Frontier. Or that sense of opportunity, however exaggerated, that moved Irish-born Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Myles Keogh, destined to die with Custer, to write that in America — that "queer country" where "impudence and presumption" carried great weight and "a certain lack of sensitiveness" was vital to success — "you are judged only by your merits as a man." It was no Eastern journalist but a simple cowboy who, asked by an English visitor whether his "master" was at home, summed up the Frontier philosophy by remarking: "The son of a bitch hasn't been born yet."

Pseudo-History of Events

by John C. Chalberg

***Hold On, Mr. President* by Sam Donaldson, New York: Random House; $17.95.**

Horace Greeley may have had it right for his 19th-century compatriots, but the proper direction for the ambitious voyagers of this century has too often been eastward. Just ask New Mexico's own Samuel Andrew Donaldson.

No one asked her, but Chloe Hampson Donaldson thinks she knows why her son strayed from the straight and narrow path: "Sam was always an obedient child until he went back east."

Politicians make the trek, and budding journalists have similar experiences. Happiness was not to be Sam Donaldson's until he had retreated within the beltway before there was a beltway to hunker down within. There, still wet behind the earphones, he went to work for a Washington television station in 1961; and there, still a loyal Westerner, he cast a vote for Barry Goldwater in 1964.

Three years was apparently not enough for Washington to work its magic on a fledgling newsman who barely eight years earlier had organized the Young Republicans of El Paso and welcomed a campaigning Richard Nixon to west Texas. However, a quarter of a century of the Washington high life has turned Chloe Donalds-

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on's "obedient child" into an institution, obedient only to deadlines and his network bosses.

What happened? Twenty of his Washington years Mrs. Donaldson's second son spent in the employ of ABC News, 10 under the direction of Roone Arledge, erstwhile boy wonder of televised sport. The result? Sam Donaldson, unknown neophyte, has been transformed into Sam Donaldson, veteran celebrity. Hence this book.

We Americans pride ourselves on either the absence of an American class system or in its fluidity. In truth, in America there are two classes: celebrities and all the rest of us. Andy Warhol notwithstanding, 15 minutes in the limelight doesn't really count. Twenty years among the stars does. It also destroys.

We Americans also pride ourselves on our treasured personal freedom. In truth, in America there are the free and the unfree — not only are the celebrities denied the all-American pleasure of bellying up to an all-American bar, in full assurance of their all-American anonymity, but they are also doomed to act out whatever role their public has assigned to them.

The producers of *This Week With David Brinkley* understand typecasting. So does Sam: "David Brinkley is the leader. George Will is the intellectual. I am the district attorney. . . . Because of David, no one leaves offended. Because of George, no one gets away with delivering fuzzy arguments. Because of me, no one gets a free ride."

Everyone has a role to play, and the play must go on. Is the ordinary Washington pol genuinely terrified of an assault in the form of a Donaldson-held microphone thrust before him? Sam would have us believe so, but the nature of his business makes it doubtful. Any public figure worth at least a dash of salt is not shaking at the sight of Sam Donaldson. They know the value of free TV exposure, and they know that a game is being played. One wonders if Sam does.

Ronald Reagan, the actor, was often the victim of typecasting. But Sam Donaldson, ill-mannered reporter and TV star, is just as typecast and just as much an actor as President Reagan was — or is. The only difference may be that Donaldson has the less firm grip on the reality of his (non-Hollywood) lot — perhaps the shout ought to be "hold on, Mr. Donaldson, hold on."

About the time Sam Donaldson came to Washington, Daniel Boorstin wrote *The Image* (subtitled "a guide to pseudo-events in America"). "Pseudo-events" are called into being by the media; they have no independent reality. News, according to Boorstin, was not being reported on such shows; it was being created.

Donaldson gives no hint of any awareness of Boorstin's insight. He simply asserts what to him is both obvious and commendable: *This Week With David Brinkley* is a success precisely because it is a newsmaker. A month after the program debuted, its reputation was "established" when Muammar Qaddafi was given air time to deny that a Libyan hit squad was headed for Washington and label President Reagan a liar. The result was a "banner headline" in the *Washington Post*. What more could a Sam Donaldson ask for?

A few years later an appearance by Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos produced what Donaldson can only describe as a "remarkable moment." Daniel Boorstin might agree but would be deeply troubled by what actually transpired. In response to a George Will query regarding the possibility of advancing the scheduled date for Filipino elections, Marcos instantly called a "snap election."

A pseudo-event (the Brinkley show) called into being a historical event — was the result hard news or manufactured news? And what of Marcos' role? Did he act on impulse? Did he use the panel — or did the panel use him? Should the media applaud themselves for becoming not only part of newsmaking but also part of the newsworthy result? None of these questions seem to trouble Mr. Donaldson.

Those who do have questions of Mr. Donaldson will be much disappointed as they whip through the froth of his memoir. Why did a young Sam Donaldson decide to become a television reporter in the first place? What qualifications, aside from sheer ambition, did he bring to his chosen field? How has television news, not to mention Sam Donaldson, matured — or at least changed — over the past quarter century? Is Donaldson himself an Exhibit A for those who believe that life as a network talking head draws one both eastward and leftward? Do celebrityhood and television subtly, but inevitably, corrupt the process of news gathering and news dissemination?

Such questions are neither asked nor answered. Television, already intruding into living rooms and bedrooms, may play an intrusive role in policymaking itself. TV reporters are free to barge into the private lives of public figures. But Sam Donaldson, the television journalist, apparently refused to intrude upon the recesses of his own mind when he sat before his word processor.

Donaldson can never be accused of engaging in "happy talk" on the evening news. But he forgets that "nasty talk" can be just as superficial. With him as memoirist, what we have seen and heard is apparently all we are ever going to get.

John C. Chalberg teaches history at Normandale Community College.

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Letter From Philadelphia

by James L. Sauer

Swan Song

"Did you hear what happened to the swan?"

Tucked away in the residential area along suburban Philadelphia's main line lies the idyllic campus of Eastern College. For the last four years this Christian academic institution has sponsored the Evangelical Roundtable: an attempt to find definition in the ideologically shattered realms of Evangelical-land. "The Roundtable," says the promotional material, "is designed as a forum for key evangelical leaders." I'm not sure whether that means that the key Evangelical leaders were the peons in the audience or the fellows they have speaking. I think both. So I guess that makes me one of those who, as the publicity sheet goes on to say, "command a special presence in their respective communities." I know that after the conference I received much more respect at the breakfast table.

The first years in which the round table was held touched on the issues of the Arab-Israel conflict, the success of Evangelicalism, and the Latin American problem. This year's conference was on the sanctity of life, a topic which one hopes might provide the basis for unity among Christians against the 20th century's assault on human dignity. Certainly, one would think, Christians could agree that little babies shouldn't be turned into pâté. But hope against hope.

Unfortunately, the conference displayed the "historical contradictions" now ripping Evangelicalism apart. Unlike the charismatic media-magnates who are destroying Christian witness through their power-perverted addiction to wealth, fame, and unrepentant sin, the Evangelicals are fighting through an identity crisis between their traditionalist catholic, call it Puritan, wing and their mystical, millennialist "imanentizers of the Eschaton." Having no ecumenical Office for the Repression of Nasty Heresies, Evangelicals have come to tolerate such a variety of weird birds in their nests that they can't tell a dove from a pig with wings.

Yet it was quite a wingding, and a good time was had by all during the three-day conference. Ted Engstrom, soon to retire as president of World Vision, was a conference M.C., cracking amiable jokes which won him the "Johnny Carson of Evangelicalism" appellation. R.C. Sproul, an orthodox Presbyter and scratch golfer, "the Jack Nicklaus of Evangelicalism," gave after-breakfast devotions. In fact, there were representatives present from every portion of Christ's spiritual body, Evangelical Division: Ron Sider, a liberal seamless garment pro-lifer; Kay Cole James, a super articulate public affairs director from the National Right to Life Committee; John H. Yoder, a clear spoken but humorless pacifist; Harold O.J. Brown, a fuzzy spoken but witty Just-Warrior; and Eastern College's own Evangelical controversialist, Tony Campolo.

Nothing displayed the spiritual schizophrenia that infects Evangelicalism, however, like some of the speeches on the first day of the conference by Chuck Colson and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott. It was like listening to the Apostle Paul and a priestess of Moloch.

Colson was in form. As keynote speaker, he rose to the occasion and, like a master musician, touched the keys which called forth the symphony of biblical orthodoxy. His was the call for human dignity in a world gone mad with Nietzschean will. His was not the philosophy of our moment; but looking back to a Maker, to the ordered creation, to the inerrant revelation of a Maker's will in history, he traced the theme of human dignity across time, invoking the witness of the saints: Pascal, Solzhenitsyn, Edmund Burke, Walker Percy. He called for the end of our nightmare of ghoulish practices of abortion and genetic engineering and for a return to Christian orthodoxy, to Christian reason, and to Christian living. The choir was delighted.

"Did you hear what happened to the swan?"

Mollenkott rose before us like a goliath to challenge the army of the living God. Just when you thought the old heresies had died out, someone like Virginia Mollenkott steps forward to renew one's faith in the depravity of man. Er, excuse me, depravity of persons. Antinomianism lives. When the Apostle Paul asked, "Shall we sin that grace may abound?" Virginia said yes.

Dr. Mollenkott, an English professor from Patterson College, is one of those queer birds who call themselves Evangelical while attacking everything that Evangelicalism stands for. She is coauthor with Letha Scanzoni of *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?*, a seminal debauchery of scripture which advocates "covenantal homosexuality." But it is not just chastity that she's against; she's against sexism, ageism, elitism, classism—all that bad stuff.

Does she believe in the authority of Scripture? Only as it is validated by her own warped reason and sin-soaked experience. Does she worship the Father through the Son? Only as she remakes the Maker into her image, desexing the Divine Manchild and refashioning the Deity into a She/He/It, a Trinity of Parent, Child, and Significant Cosmic Other. Does she hold to the biblical order of sexuality? Only as it is reinterpreted to allow for what Falwell has called Adam and Steve. And does she affirm the sanctity of human life? Only if it allows us to rip limb from limb the helpless torsos

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of innocent babes in the womb. "After all," I heard her say as she held up her fingers to an inch width, "they're only this big." Humanity is now determined by size. And what is our size in the hands of God?

Representing the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, and invoking the god called "Will," this unhappy woman, hater of life, lover of self, worshiper of death, gave forth her Hymn to a Holocaust. "It is our right . . . it is our body . . . it is our choice." It was the creed of Hell.

And we sat through it. And many clapped. And no young David stood up to sling the stones of refutation: "Thus says the Lord—you shall not murder. Thus says the Lord—you shall do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Thus says the Lord—you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Thus says the Lord—whatever you do to the least of these you have done unto me. Thus says the Lord . . . " We are too polite for telling people to their faces that they are false prophets and in danger of Hell fire.

"Did you hear what happened to the swan?" he said again. This time I turned to listen.

As the geese fly in across the beautiful lakes which adorn our campus and glide to a peaceful aquatic landing, one is touched by the feeling that all is right with the world. It is all very Browningesque. The white and black swans float gently on the placid ponds. In the little Kingdom of Eastern College, this outpost of Christendom, the shalom of God reigns. All seems otherworldly. But it is not the case.

"Someone kicked to death one of the swans."

It was like an arrow in the soul. It takes some real will to kill something so beautiful. And swans are not small animals; they'll fight.

"But that's not all. They also stomped to death the eggs. Crushed all the eggs in the nest."

Crushed the signets. Herod. O Ramah. Weep for the children, for they are no more. And they invent new forms of evil. Total depravity. Calvin was right. Tares among the wheat. And Pharaoh slew the children. Wickedness.

As Evangelicalism continues to grant the pulpit to the pro-death forces, one can think of no more fitting parable. Someone crushed the eggs in the nest.

James L. Sauer is Director of Library at Eastern College.

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

The Dakota Men

"What ever happened to real men . . . the kind of men with good old-fashioned values like honesty, integrity, sincerity, and ambition?" asks FOOD—Farmers of Ongoing Determination—in a promotional flier. It turns out that they think they have a corner on the real-man market—and I'm willing to let them suspend my disbelief.

North Dakotans Larry Jaeger and Karen Tyndall cofounded FOOD in 1986. The nonprofit organization had three express purposes: to let people know just how bad the farm economy is; to raise money for what they refer to as the "American Farmer, the backbone of our country"; and to let city folks know that today's farmers are far from being hicks.

FOOD literature says, "As we all know, the farmers of our country are experiencing very difficult times. The seriousness ranges from severe economic hardship to losing three- and four-generation family farms. Other losses include income, pride, and heritage, not to mention numerous cases of farmers taking their own lives. Unfortunately, this is more widespread than the general public is aware of."

Now, there are some who might argue that farmers' hardships are caused by governmentally, artificially set prices and the easy loans that follow hard on their heels, and that no amount of self-help will help the farmers unless the government backs off, taking its money with it. There are some who would question that family farms (as opposed to, say, farming corporations) are *in themselves* such an important part of the American cultural gene pool that we should subsidize

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them. There are some who might ask, "If we're so worried about the farmer's 'way of life,' what about the doctor's? the grocer's? the schoolteacher's?"

But in the face of the brave determination of Jaeger and Tyndall and the people at FOOD, such questions seem mean and petty. They aren't asking for a handout or a tax break or a better-than-even chance of success—at least, not here. They've come up with a product to sell, and proceeds will go to needy farm families across the country for food, clothing, housing, and job retraining, with part of the money going to state mental health organizations and a college scholarship program.

The product? The 1988 "Dakota Men" calendar, featuring, on heavy satin gloss, 14 of the ruggedest, best-looking guys that ever tossed a bale or overhauled a Deere. All single. All "looking," or so they claim. As wholesome and inviting a bunch of males as you could find this side of *The Cosby Show*. (The saltiest month is October, featuring Ted Hanson, 24, who says, "Friendship is a critical first step in a mutually supportive relationship," and feels that "farming provides an opportunity for creative and aggressive minds." Ted is "a free-spirited man" who enjoys "fishing naked and French kissing in a classic '57 Chevy.")

January's Cary Reiswig, 22, sits in a barn in his sheepskin coat and a plaid flannel shirt, nuzzling a colt. Cary says, "I like girls," and adds that he wants a wife to go along with the winters and his chosen farm life. Cary's not stupid. Kevin Pifer, 28, a farmer and fledgling politician, stands in the state capitol with his pinstripe jacket over his white-shirted shoulder; "Harvest season is a beautiful time of year to share intimate moments with someone special," he says. Dennis Dipple, 28, likes "open, honest people, physical fitness" (in front of his combine, Dennis Dipple ripples in jeans and a body shirt), "studying the markets and a sense of humor," and feels that "women can be some of your most supportive friends." Perry Miller, 26, FOOD's director of public relations, presents the only real beefcake in the calendar as he poses in a bathrobe with one leg exposed to mid-thigh, opening a Christmas present on a stylish hearth. There is a lot of white tooth in this calendar, and more than an occasional soft mustache. These guys *reek* of rugged sensitivity. You can give this calendar to your Mom or your maiden aunt with a clear conscience.

Back in June, all of the Dakota Men (13 months and a cover) were auctioned off to 14 young women for dates, which the men paid for themselves. Proceeds from the auction went to FOOD. Since early spring 1987, there have been dozens of local and national television and radio interviews, including a spot on the *Today* show (FOOD is now trying to get them to do a follow-up story), and they're "coming at Johnny Carson from three different directions," says Roger Jaeger, founder Larry Jaeger's brother, board member, and Mr. February. Features in *Cosmopolitan* and *Women's World* will come out in a few months, and even farm journals—read mostly by men—are covering the story. Twenty-five thousand calendars were sold in the first two weeks, through 85 North Dakota access points and displays in Waldenbooks in eight other states, and FOOD is planning a mailing to 3,000 college bookstores. In Texas, 8,000 nursing students will sell the calendars as a fund-raising project for *themselves* ("We're very willing to negotiate on terms," says Roger Jaeger). As if all this isn't enough to guarantee success, the huge Women's International Bowling Congress, which will convene in Bismarck, North Dakota, in 1989, is interested in "doing something" with the calendars.

That all 14 1988 Dakota Men are North Dakotans is a coincidence, Roger Jaeger tells me; FOOD considered men from several states. What's more important is that every single one of them is an honest-to-God *farmer*. And plans are already being made for the fall 1988 pageant (to pick the 1989 Dakota Men), which will be held in *South* Dakota in order to get more entrants from there and widen the calendar's appeal. Nineteen eighty-nine is both North and South Dakota's centennial, which won't hurt at all. Clearly, FOOD is not fooling around.

"Farming schedules make it hard to get all the Dakota Men together," says Roger. "We were very lucky this June to get all the guys into a barn for a group shot." (Farmers will understand just how lucky that mid-June shot was, especially since all the men wore tuxedos.) The original projection was that FOOD would sell a million 1988 calendars, at $8.95 retail. They won't come close to that figure this year, or even next. But hundreds of thousands of farm families are genuinely in trouble, never mind the reasons, and FOOD aims to sell an honest product in an honest way to help them. Something here appeals to me. Possibly it's Front Cover Jeff Dahl, 31, who likes the feel of black velvet and riding bareback in the warm summer rain.

Jane Greer edits Plains Poetry Journal. *The toll-free number for information on FOOD and calendars is 1-800-345-8000.*

Letter From a Sodbuster

by David Tillotson

Breaking the Antaean Bond

Corn planting season has arrived again, and the soil is moving. Hot spring winds that have foresters on red alert are picking up the earth, clay fractions first, and sending it off. This gale mocks the fine print don'ts on the 50-pound sacks of rootworm pesticide. It too is blowing in the wind. No way will the stuff conform to the encyclopedic "Regulations for Application" printed on the bags.

Halfway between Milwaukee and Madison, towering clouds of soil rise from the pithy muck-farm fields as "Black Rollers," ghosts from the 30's, drift across I-94, a mystery to the hedonistic rubberneckers heading toward a rock concert in Mad City; "must be a fire over there somewhere."

North of Uvalde and hours west from San Antonio in "Cactus Jack" Garner's West Texas hill country, the goats have pared much of it down to bedrock. Like Rodney Dangerfield, the goats don't get no respect, but they *do* get all the mesquite, cactus, rabbit brush, the tough thorny things that any other self-respecting grazing critter would leave unbrowsed.

We can see white slabs peppering

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the slopes in the distance. They are not cemetery markers but rather bits of bedrock, and the whole nation should be in a state of mourning because all this really is just part of a long-running funeral service for the earth itself.

A thousand miles to the north, silt beds stratify in a vast lake at New Town. Downstream at Oahe and Francis Case more silt chokes the Missouri as it picks its way through Montana and the Dakotas.

Elmer Peterson laid this whole Muddy River fiasco out for us with that wonderful diatribe "Big Dam Foolishness" over 30 years ago, and one must wonder if the head of the Army Corps of Engineers or any North Plains politician—anyone with influence in the federal colossus—ever read or understood a single word of it. Or cared about it if he did. Nihilism always seems to be at work in our federal agencies.

And out on the ranch our good ol' cowboys seem to believe that erosion just happens. Each should come have a look at what their bossies have done to the Missouri. The Sacred Cows of Denzel Ferguson are not illusions, and because of them the West today is but a battered remnant of its former robust self. Pioneer rancher Will Barnes first saw cows doing it to the San Simeon Valley in Arizona in 1887. "Green meadows," he said, "were replaced by wide expanses of drifting sand."

A hundred years have since come and gone, and the relentless pummeling by cattle, sheep, and sodbusting monster machines continues. Take a look at the Paluse north of Moscow, Idaho, or the vast tracts along the Snake. Almost anywhere on the Public Lands west of the 100th meridian you can see evidence of the problem. Meanwhile, our two great federal land agencies, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, have been either unable or unwilling to stop it. And as a consequence, some of the privatizers at Bozeman and Arizona State are using it all as evidence to make a plausible case, superficially at least, for federal divestiture.

Everywhere the rib cage of Mother Earth is showing. Pat down the deceptive velvet-like blanket of soybeans and alfalfa in Iowa and Minnesota, and you can feel her vertebrae. Here granite and limestone, there shale or gravel—it's all right up there! No longer much well-muscled soil on these cherished bones. And the bills for fertilizer run into thousands.

Between Boise and Salt Lake, permanent road signs advise headlights because there are "Dust Storms Ahead." So this is a coast-to-coast kind of thing and north-south from Milk River to the Brazos.

What to do? It may be necessary, but it is next to impossible to follow Aldo Leopold's commandment that we must somehow live more interconnectedly, more harmoniously with the land. As Leopold visualized it, "land" included products of the earth plus water, wilderness, wildlife, forests, moods, vistas, the works. The health of the land was dependent on our moving beyond the "A" (of what he called "the A-B cleavage") and its utilitarian emphasis, to the "B" level, where we would come to understand that trees were not just for two-by-four's any more than sandhill cranes were merely food for the table.

Sheep are destined to stay illiterate, goats helpless dropouts, and the cows have been following one another about, single file, on fragile mountain ecosystems ever since cows were invented.

But what about us humanoids who are said to be able to outthink the ungulates and whom Professor Durward Allen ranks with glaciers and volcanoes as a formidable geologic force? One visit to Ducktown, Tennessee, will show you the point he is making.

If with a mere four million citizens we couldn't "get" conservation in George Washington's time (both he and Jefferson complained about the lack of a resource sensitivity), can we expect to "get" it today, with 250 million?

It has been 80 years since TR's conference on conservation, well over a hundred since the homesteading laws. Free education ran through all of it. How could we have not, by this time, developed an ecologically literate populace, aware of the necessity of limits, on killing whales, cutting redwoods, controlling our own numbers, appetites, anything.

But just as the Masai in East Africa cannot or will not stop their age-old practice of overgrazing with consequent desertification, and the primitive mountain peasants on every continent will not alter their deforestation practices, so American and European landowners cannot seem to forgo overfarming and overgrazing that fill the air and water with soil particles.

We have mountains of data on all our resource problems. What we lack is the moral and civic spunk finally to take care of what we have.

As they usually do, in an attempt to stop the abuse, the regimenters ask for more and better laws.

But unless we are better men and women, what difference do laws make? Every year on our farm, though laws are on the books, we lose Christmas trees to the poachers. Every day rare and endangered animals are being shot. This too is illegal—as is pollution, arson, grand theft-auto, insider trading. To practice the right kind of

BOOKS IN BRIEF—ENVIRONMENT

Rediscovering America: John Muir in His Time and Ours **by Frederick Turner, San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.** The quite readable story of a Scot who moved to Wisconsin and became one of the world's great walkers, a great environmentalist, and an even greater crank.

Philosophy Gone Wild: Essays in Environmental Ethics **by Holmes Rolston, III, Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books; $19.95.** A philosopher and naturalist propounds a conservation ethic that is free from much of the lunacy that marks this sort of writing. Both lyrical and sensible, Rolston has serious things to say about man's place in nature. The major shortcoming is the narrow range of his reading.

Religion and Environmental Crisis, **edited by Eugene C. Hargrove, Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.** This volume is a good example of what happens when general issues become overspecialized. What is "religion" (as opposed to real religions) that it can have any relevance for environmentalism? Much of the volume is pervaded by the pseudo-scholarly zaniness of the first contributor, who argues that Pan really was the universal ancient god of pantheism who gave the Greeks and Romans a sense of environmental responsibility.

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conservation, we have to be the right kind of people.

During World War II, when Aldo Leopold wrote his seminal essays, this was an unspoken given, simply taken for granted, and his projected solutions, though visionary, were somehow palpable. Yes, we could do it. We *would* do it. We could batten down our moral hatches, patch up our tattered ethical armor, suck up the old gut, and for once in our lives do what this good man said we ought to do, about soil, land, wilderness, flora, and fauna — even if it hurt some, even if it didn't feel good.

He was talking duty.

But all this was before Mario Salio, Hugh Hefner, Phil "Feelgood" Donahue, Timothy Leary. The liberal establishment, in charge of interpreting "the environmentalists" and "farmers" to the larger society, seemed to favor the "do it" messages coming to us from our rock and movie stars, media fellow travelers, and the professors who thought Richard Weaver was the ultimate simp. But of course Professor Weaver was right and his nihilistic critics were wrong. Some ideas are now having their consequences.

Nihilism is breeding thoughtless environmental citizens — from the litterbugs to the corporate midnight dumpers. Moms on heroin are spawning fetal addicts. Nobody is connecting anything to anything. Hedonism is creating slothful truckers, engineers, brakemen, hurtling through the night with thousands of pounds of toxics aboard. Eventually we might expect junkies at control panels in nuclear power plants, missile silos, with job tenures guaranteed by the ACLU and the Supreme Court.

Nihilistic federal bureaucrats and tax-and-spend congressmen (is not spend now, pay later — or never — a nihilistic act?) are stealing the farmers' land by sitting on their hands as resultant inflation mocks any attempt to pay off the farm debts. Cornered by political/philosophical forces he cannot control or even influence, the farmer/rancher opens up all his vulnerable acres in a last-ditch effort to stay alive. Erosion follows. Richard Weaver, indeed, was *the* prophet of common sense.

Beyond hedonism and nihilism, the third and final God of our *Zeitgeist*, materialism, engenders an avaricious thing-worship which, from the assembly-line workers to the takeover strategists upstairs, pooh-pooh thoughts about the environmental consequences of the product. Thus Milwaukee sewage workers who shut down the Metro plant and polluted Lake Michigan are as culpable as Monsanto chemists who did not think or care or plan or test ahead for the environmental fall-out of polychlorinated biphenols.

Leopold had unhappily found that "one of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds," but there was nevertheless the duty to sound the alarm, to be a land doctor who sees the marks of death in the community "that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise."

His message, despite what his students have done to deform and politicize it, was always education, responsibility, stewardship.

Prior to Leopold, there was education and some commonsense understandings from TR and Gifford Pinchot, but environmental awareness was never in the forefront — never fully focused on the minds, the attitudes, the hearts of men and women. Conservation for Leopold grew to be an ethical imperative and less a statistical, technological, or legislative happening.

So it was not until Leopold's two nontechnical books of essays appeared posthumously ('49-'53) that a sophisticated ecological message emerged, as potent as it was persuasive.

Leopold's powers of persuasion tantalized some good minds through the 50's, and his works, in paperback, became premier source-books among the cognoscenti, in time for the fateful 60's and 70's.

Sadly, for all Leopold's brilliance and astonishing environmental insights, the campus multitudes discovered the essays when all hell was breaking loose about everything. The political priorities of the crazies — their sermonizing (will it ever end?) about drugs, promiscuity, Vietnam, proper racial percentages, politicized curricula, their repudiation of academic standards, their intimidation and disregard of authority — drove off their parents, who to this day remain skeptical about most everything their radicalized kids did and said.

The kids called themselves and believed themselves to be "environmentalists." Their parents and troubled taxpayers apparently believed this cause was about as far-out as everything else. But like Hitler's Kinder Corps, these future leaders were being taught by their professors to "think" with their blood, their skin pigment, their endocrines. If it feels good, do it. If you don't like the dean, run him up the stairs of Old Main and burn the place down. Blow up the math building.

The nonpolitical solutions for soil conservation and other environmental difficulties proffered by Round River and Sand County Almanac were drowned by the concurrent flood of other environmental material from the Sierra Club, Charles Reich, Alvin Toffler, Barry Commoner, Paul Ehrlich. The "gurus" were running with the hounds of the *Zeitgeist* and sleeping with the foxes (the politicians, then attempting a successful takeover of the movement), blaming the establishment for not pushing "enlightened" legislation. Loath to put off their young audiences, they refrained from suggesting there were prerequisites for conservation, like self-denial, accountability, a willingness to listen, a respect for the knowledge of others, the courage to discriminate, a concomitant skepticism for egalitarianism, empathy for one's own country, a duty to know and then do one's duty.

Philosophy leads us back to the Muddy Mo, dust storms, siltation, and what we have done to this beautiful country in 200 years.

All of us, farmers and foresters, yippies and yuppies, corporations and cooperatives, are a product of our philosophers.

Our world is shaped by philosophers. In Antelope, Oregon, the Bhagwan Rajneeshi got thousands to perform like puppets on a string. In Guyana, "Rev." Jim Jones persuaded 900 to take cyanide on command. Marxist-Leninism threatens to send the whole world up in flames. What we believe and why we believe it and what we do in the world as a consequence of our beliefs has everything to do with what happens to our supporting resources.

Environmental thinkers from our

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near and distant past knew this. Men like Durward Allen, Paul Sears, Loren Eiseley, John Steinbeck, and before them TR, Henry Thoreau, Indian Chiefs Seattle and Looking Glass. Cartoonist-pamphleteer Jay N. "Ding" Darling never failed to emphasize the imperative of philosophical underpinnings. Leopold said that Theodore Roosevelt "insisted that our conquest of nature carried with it a moral responsibility for the perpetuation of the threatened forms of wildlife . . . to anyone for whom wild things are something more than a pleasant diversion, it constitutes one of the milestones in moral evolution." Prof. Durward Allen at Purdue attempted to equip the environmental citizen with "his own conservation philosophy . . . (so) like Agassiz he could take the facts into his own hands, look, and see for himself."

For the good of this earth, we must work to see that our ethics are in order, that our first principles are up to speed as we go out on the great trek of life, lest we become part of some unconscious, insane migration that unwittingly pushes its future into the sea.

David Tillotson is a working farmer in Lake Mills, Wisconsin.

Letter From Denmark

by Herbert London

The New Age in Copenhagen

For centuries philosophers have grappled with the question of how society should be organized. The overarching issues involve the maintenance of order and the distribution of political power. While the answers to these knotty problems varied greatly from Plato to Burke, there was a belief that these concerns were essential lineaments in social organization. Even many of the 19th-century anarchists conceded as much.

However, in the late 60's youthful adherents of a new social order suspended rational judgment. They wanted a secular nirvana without the imposition of order and power. While the political legacy of the late 60's and early 70's is arguably insignificant, Denmark allowed its disenchanted free spirits to establish the "Free State of Christiana," to serve as an example of the logic of that overheated period.

At the outset, this community in the heart of Copenhagen was based on certain well-understood principles: peace, tolerance, no hard drugs, no weapons, and no cars. This was to be a "separate state" unaffected by what transpired outside its gates and unreliant on the Danish police force. With 16 years of unfettered experience under its belt, it is apparent that Christiana is a slum with all the attendant problems of any marginal urban area. Drug addiction, alcoholism, disease, violence, crime, and racism are rife. The hawking of drugs is done openly in a bazaar called Pusher Street, one of Europe's great drug malls. Racial incidents occur regularly, often with antagonists using guns. The community's lake — once bucolic — has been converted into an open sewer in defiance of the avowed belief in environmental purity.

By any standard, including those used by youthful adherents, Christiana is the result of a failed vision. Henrik Gottlieb, treasurer of the residents' council, contends that the community is a "social garbage can." About 100 of the original settlers have banded into regional councils grudgingly applying rules on a community that claimed it didn't need any. Rent, which was strictly forbidden, has surfaced in the form of under-the-table payments for desirable flats. Some of the remaining gentle folk wish to extend the ban on heroin and cocaine to hashish and marijuana, even though there isn't an enforcement mechanism. Many residents also claim there is a need for regular police patrols.

In every respect, Christiana is a Hobbesian world in which mankind revisits the state of nature. The freedom sought by these New Age idealists has become license and crime; the desire for a society free of rules has led to self-indulgence and a call for restraint; the removal of the police has fostered private revenge. Here is a microcosm of a community unbound by law or conscience, metamorphosized into a living hell.

Living without external rules or internal inhibitions, the citizens of the Free State of Christiana fell prey to barbarism and sinful temptations. That this should be the case is hardly new under the sun. However, for a time it was believed that human perfectibility could be achieved through the elimination of controls, conventions, and norms. The denizens of Christiana have learned to their despair that salvation isn't reached through dope-induced euphoria. There isn't an airlift to Eden, only a bumpy ride on the highway of life.

Nonetheless, avatars of the new age suggest that while Christiana failed, it is a failure of personalities, not structure. They point to the white power groups, vagrants, and drug addicts who gravitated to the community. But they will not (perhaps cannot) accept that their conception was hopelessly flawed. In some respects this condition is reminiscent of the aging hippie who blames his confusion and poverty on a bad marriage, bad dope, and an insensitive government.

There is something pathetic about these citizens of Christiana. They got what they wanted. Their dream of a self-styled community based on their fantasies was realized. I am reminded of Nietzsche's claim that what one strives for in youth is achieved with abundance in old age. The anarchists got their anarchy and all the social despair that goes with it. The orthodox libertarians got their freedom and license as well. The Marxists got the free exchange of goods and commodities, only to discover that markets are needed for sensible and equitable distribution of the fruits of production.

Rarely do we have a chance to observe the consequences of a social experiment. Christiana represents this kind of opportunity. Unfortunately, news media coverage has focused on the idiosyncrasies in this experiment and the unique character of Denmark, instead of on the assumptions on which this community was organized. Perhaps that is as it should be. Many people associated with the media are products of the same *Weltanschauung* that produced Christiana. Their illusions — like those of youthful idealists in Denmark — die hard.

Herbert London is dean of the Gallatin Division of NYU and Senior Fellow of The Hudson Institute.

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Letter From Albion

by Andrei Navrozov

Whose War Is It, Anyway?

According to Josef Joffe, foreign editor of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the German historian Ernst Nolte once asked at a Harvard seminar whether anyone present could find the idea of the "Final Solution" in history before Hitler. Since no one answered, he drew the attention of his audience to the work of Marx and the concept of annihilation of the bourgeoisie as a class.

Writing in a recent issue of *Encounter*, Mr. Joffe recalls:

> By now, puzzlement had frozen into strained silence, and the American scholar Eric Goldhagen, a survivor of the Holocaust, tried a bit of friendly irony: "Professor Nolte, when Fiorello LaGuardia [New York's mayor] overwhelmed his political opponents, the Democrats, in the elections of 1932, the *New York Times* quoted him in a banner headline: 'We Really Murdered Them.' Herr Nolte, he did not mean it literally."

Mr. Joffe does not record the incautious professor's reply, adding didactically that he "did not get the point then, nor has he apparently accepted the distinction between metaphor and mechanized mass murder ever since." Quite obviously, the distinction exists, as do other distinctions — between (Marxist) theory and (Marxist) practice, for instance — and one doubts that the man whom Mr. Joffe describes as "a Heidegger disciple who favors 'metaphysical history'" has been as blind to them as he makes him out to be. It is, after all, the *nature* of such distinctions which remains unclear, one reason why, 15 years hence, Mr. Joffe is still talking about Professor Nolte, Professor Nolte is still talking about Hitler and Marx, and we are still interested in what they have to say.

In brief, the substance of the "Controversy" (to borrow *Encounter*'s section heading under which Mr. Joffe's article, "The Battle of the Historians," appeared in the June issue) is defined by the degree of attention which a number of historians, most notably Ernst Nolte and Andreas Hillgruber, have attracted in the German press with their "revisionist" view of National Socialism as a "reactive" phenomenon with origins in the clear and present danger of Soviet expansionism in the 1930's. Mr. Joffe sets out to lambaste the "revisionist" view, first put forward in Nolte's article "*Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will*" ("The Past That Will Not Pass Away") in West Germany's leading conservative paper, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, on June 6, 1986. Since both the argument and the counterargument are highly polemical, I will not endeavor to summarize them here. Instead, I propose to focus on a recent study, bound to be perceived as yet another volley from the "revisionist" camp: *Stalin's War* by Ernst Topitsch, professor of philosophy at Graz University in Austria, just published in England.

The trouble with "revisionists" like Nolte and Hillgruber, it seems to me, is that their strain of historiography is prevalently philosophic, rather than probative (and in that sense Mr. Joffe's point about "metaphysical history" is, one suspects, something of a sore spot). They tend to address an issue like "guilt" by speculating about the internal causes of the Nazi reaction, instead of attempting to uncover the facts that would objectify their conclusions. This is just what Professor Topitsch aims to do in his study, sufficiently original and well articulated to bring about a genuine reexamination of the war, its origins, and its aftermath. In short, the antonym of "revisionism" as practiced by Professor Topitsch is banality, which brings one to the question: Is it not the duty of a historian (a thinker, an artist) to be revisionist?

The conventional view of events leading to the outbreak of the war, with Hitler as its evil genius, differs from the orthodox Soviet view largely to the extent it acknowledges the criminally irresponsible behavior of Western statesmen and its effects on the balance of power in the 1930's. As Churchill would later summarize it, this consisted in:

> Delight in smooth-sounding platitudes, refusal to face unpleasant facts, desire for popularity and electoral successes irrespective of the vital interests of the state, genuine love of peace and pathetic belief that love can be its sole foundation, obvious lack of intellectual vigour . . . all these constituted a picture of British fatuity and fecklessness which, though devoid of guile, was not devoid of guilt.

In other words, in their interpretation of the history of the war, Stalin and his successors blame Hitler, while Western democracies blame Hitler and themselves. It is astonishing that — "revisionists" aside — Professor Topitsch is virtually alone among Western historians of the period in his attempt to complete the triangle by adding Stalin's name to the list of those who, in Churchill's words once again, "played a definite part in the unleashing upon the world of horrors and miseries which, even so far as they have unfolded, are already beyond comparison in human experience."

His is a difficult task. When the Soviet Army entered Berlin in May 1945, a *spetsnaz* task force located and "put into safe-keeping" all records of the Stalin-Hitler negotiations, including the crucial documents relating to the Ribbentrop-Molotov meeting in November 1940. Needless to say, they have been "safe" ever since. For this reason, a historian who wishes to see beyond Soviet representations on the one hand and Western conventions on the other must rely on his instinct, along with what "hard" evidence he can obtain, to piece together his view of events. Received wisdom, not intuition, is the enemy.

It is Hitler's reputation as a strategist that is Professor Topitsch's first target. He shows that "the greatest general of all time" was, in reality, a pathetic amateur, outmaneuvered by Stalin at every turn. His tactical skill (magnified in the light of his successful record of deceiving or intimidating democratic leaders) was, on closer inspection, merely a gambler's audacity, giving way to sheer panic at the first unlucky turn of fortune's wheel. "What do we do now?" a bug-eyed Hitler is said to have asked Ribbentrop when England's ultimatum was handed to him

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on September 3, 1939. (If all this sounds a little like something out of *Hogan's Heroes*, it isn't surprising—so do Hitler's adversaries, born, like him, of the democratic flesh and blood of a free West. "Never has a simpler document been issued in history with consequences more far-reaching or more pregnant with hope," the *New York Times* reported on "the results of an intimate conversation between Chancellor Adolf Hitler and Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in Herr Hitler's private apartments" on September 30, 1938.)

By contrast, Stalin, as befits a good strategist, was always at least a step ahead of destiny. If Professor Topitsch exaggerates Stalin's genius for long-term thinking, his error is insignificant, for the Soviet totalitarian system, already perfected by the time Hitler seized power, was most effective in compensating for the individual shortcomings of its engineers, an advantage the National Socialist system would never possess. In any case, Professor Topitsch's contention that Stalin had duped Hitler as he would later dupe the Allies is utterly plausible.

What gives support to this contention is the existing record of diplomatic and military moves made by the Soviets in the direction of Germany, particularly after the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939 ("Now I have the world in my pocket!" the euphoric gambler is said to have exclaimed). Professor Topitsch demonstrates how, by opening and closing the tap of hostility (i.e., by intermittently violating and observing the terms of the "Boundaries and Friendship Agreement"), Stalin manipulated Hitler—his main hope for a destabilized Europe—into a world war from which he, Stalin, would emerge as the sole victor.

It is true that the Generalissimo had overestimated his own army and underestimated Hitler's impulsiveness: "Operation Barbarossa," the "treacherous" attack on Russia, came at least six months too soon. But the magnitude of this one miscalculation—tactical, not strategic—should not, Professor Topitsch argues, blind posterity to the truth about Stalin's grand design.

That design is now the map of continental Europe, and it is easy to see why the author of *Stalin's War* states unambiguously that his book "has been written more for the English-speaking than for the German reader." That it has received so little attention, here or in the United States, is in itself an alarming sign. For there is no time like the present to remind the heirs of Chamberlain on both sides of the Atlantic that the harvest of Yalta was sown in Munich by those who like to reap.

Andrei Navrozov is poetry editor for Chronicles.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Dulce et Decorum

One of the most moving war memorials I know is on a wall outside the reading room of the British Museum. It is a simple plaque with the names of a hundred or so librarians killed in the Great War. Librarians. Think about it.

That plaque makes a point, doesn't it, if not perhaps the one it was intended to make. Are we better off because those young men died? I don't know. Maybe it would be easier to say if I were Belgian.

Here's another. A few years ago, hiking in the hills above Lake Como, my wife and I came across a little chapel dedicated to the memory of local lads who died in World War II. It was decorated with freshly cut flowers. The boys it commemorated had fought for Mussolini.

Now, to have left that beautiful place to die in the sands of North Africa or the snows of Russia—well, obviously, the right or wrong of their cause is important, but why shouldn't their parents and girlfriends have built that chapel? Who could fail to be touched that, 40 years later, they still brought flowers and burned candles?

I'm told that the Vietnam memorial attracts more visitors than any other site in Washington. I'm sure that many who go there believe that the cause in which those servicemen died was futile, even wrong, but surely no one goes to gloat or to scoff. There are some lines—are they from Housman?—something like:

Here we lie who did not
choose

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Los Angeles and the Automobile: The Makings of a Modern City **by Scott L. Bottles, Berkeley: University of California Press.** A paean to the automobile—and wide open (or urbanized) spaces—by an articulate real estate salesman.

Tornado: Accounts of Tornadoes in Iowa **by John L. Stanford, Ames: Iowa State University Press.** The author, a physics professor, has dedicated this unprepossessing handbook on a force of nature to the Lord, "who designed the earth and the skies."

Seeds of Change **by Henry Hobhouse, New York: Harper and Row.** The most recent reprint of the well-known account of how the manipulated environment manipulates its manipulators.

Politics and the Ethiopian Famine, 1984-1985 **by Jason W. Clay and Bonnie K. Holcomb, Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, Inc., distributed by Transaction Books, New Brunswick, NJ; $9.95.** Condemned by Ethiopia's Marxist government and by many of the 47 Western aid organizations subsidizing it, this report outlines why unconditional humanitarian aid to tyrannies kills instead of saves.

The Hunger Machine **by Jon Bennet with Susan George, Cambridge: Polity Press.** Disregarding Ethiopia, Cambodia, the USSR, and other worthless bits of history, the authors question the world, but never their own wisdom.

The Fatal Impact: The Invasion of the South Pacific **by Alan Moorhead, New York: Harper and Row; $25.00.** Rousseau lives, in this conscience-stricken account of a Lost Paradise.

The Maine Woods **by Henry David Thoreau, New York: Harper and Row.** A reprint of a charming classic, by the man who was not afraid to be foolish.

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To flee and shame the race
from which we'd sprung.
Life, to be sure, is not so much
to lose,
But young men think it is, and
we were young.

The librarians, the fascist conscripts, the Vietnam draftees — no doubt all were scared young men. But they did not choose to flee, and the memorials honor them for it. We can sympathize with their causes or not, but we shouldn't deny those who wish to remember their kin and countrymen. Maybe we should even honor them, too.

These thoughts came to mind last spring, as I was walking across the beautiful, flowering campus of the Southern university where I teach. I passed the pedestal where "Silent Sam" usually stands. Sam is a statue of a Confederate infantryman, and he is a memorial to the university's alumni who died for the Confederacy. That month Sam had been removed for a much-needed cleaning after years of exposure to pigeons and rival football fans with paint cans.

By the empty pedestal stood a young man, obviously showing a visiting couple around. All were Yankees, by their accents. "They've sent it off to be cleaned," I heard him say. "Eight thousand dollars! Can you *believe* it?"

Well, yes, as a matter of fact I can. In *The Last Gentleman,* Will Barrett, Mississippian, tells this story:

> When I was at Princeton, I blew up a Union monument. It was only a plaque hidden in the weeds behind the chemistry building, presented by the class of 1885 in memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice to suppress the infamous rebellion, or something like that. It offended me. I synthesized a liter of trinitrotoluene in chemistry lab and blew it up one Saturday afternoon. But no one ever knew what had been blown up. It seemed I was the only one who knew the monument was there. It was thought to be a Harvard prank.

Will was wrong to do what he did. But Princeton was more wrong not to know what he'd done. Maybe Walker Percy, Mississippian, is slandering Ivy Leaguers here, but I doubt it. Say this for the South: If somebody blew up Silent Sam, it would be noticed.

And I'm afraid, in fact, that it's only a matter of time before somebody does come gunning for him. We're going through a spell of Confederacy-bashing down here. Some black folks are starting to object to state flags that incorporate the Confederate battle flag, for instance, and the Ole Miss administration has dropped that same flag as an official school symbol (largely, I gather, because coaches said it repelled black recruits — first things first). Last word from Maryland was that some schoolteacher was lobbying to change the pro-Confederate words of "Maryland, My Maryland" ("Huzzah! She spurns the northern scum," for example). There's even a move afoot to change the name of the Dixie Classic Fair in Winston-Salem; the objection is apparently to the very word "Dixie." It's nice, I guess, that we've solved all the real problems of race relations down here and can now take up the symbolic ones.

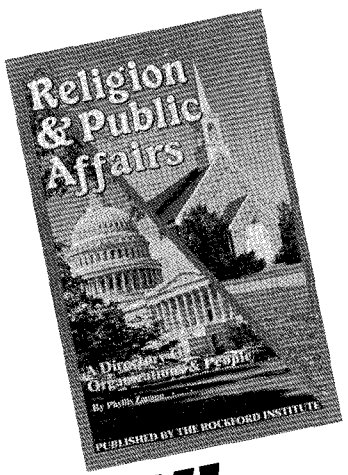
I'm actually more sympathetic than you probably suppose. Maybe it is time that we recognized that to many of our citizens, rightly or wrongly, the symbols of the Confederacy don't stand for freedom and self-determination, or for a heritage of sacrifice and honor and duty, or even for hell-raising, good-timing, don't-tread-on-me rebelry, but for white supremacy, plain and simple. Given that, they're entitled to their objections. Maybe we ought to get government out of the act and let those who value the Confederate heritage celebrate it privately.

But Silent Sam is a different matter. Like the Vietnam memorial, he doesn't honor a cause; rather, he honors some brave men who died in one. And notice I said "in one," not "for one." We can't know what motives impelled those men, but we do know that they were defending their families and their homes. And I mean *their homes*: not the shores of Tripoli, not even the halls of Montezuma, but, say, New Bern, North Carolina.

True, Sam was put up by the United Daughters of the Confederacy at a time when nearly all of the university's alumni, students, and governors saw the Lost Cause as a glorious one. That's no longer so, and some want us to acknowledge that somehow. Fair enough, but surely we can find a better way to recognize that change than by denying our alumni their memorial.

Maybe we can learn from still another memorial, an extraordinarily sweet and fitting one, in the chapel of New College, Oxford. It just lists the names of the scores of graduates who died for their country in the First World War — including a half-dozen whose country was Germany. That memorial honors the dead, and speaks well of the living, too.

John Shelton Reed is an East Tennessean with relatives on both sides of the Late Unpleasantness.



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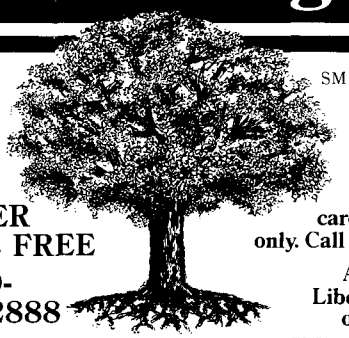

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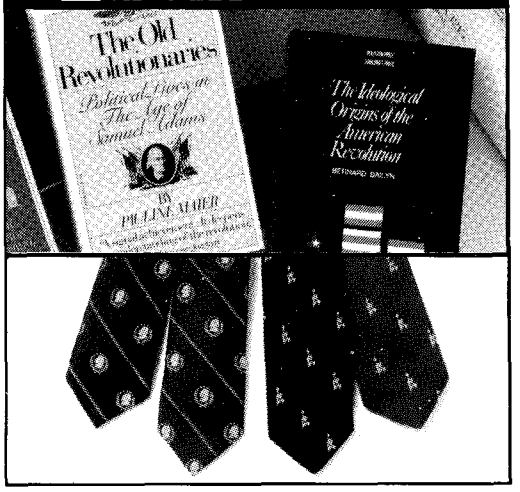
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POP CULTURE

The Null Set

by Gary S. Vasilash

Less Than Zero; directed by Marek Kanievska; screenplay by Harley Peyton, based on the novel by Bret Easton Ellis; 20th Century Fox.

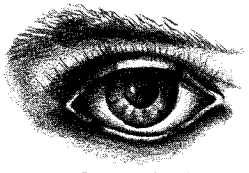
Tom Waits recently suggested to *Musician* magazine that if John Lennon knew that Michael Jackson would control The Beatles' music, Lennon would "kick his ass—and kick it really good." As I watched the film version of Bret Easton Ellis' novel *Less Than Zero*, whose title is taken from Elvis Costello, it occurred to me that Mr. Costello might want to follow Waits' suggestion.

In a way, Elvis escaped unscathed. In the novel version, a poster of Costello adorns a bedroom wall of the protagonist, Clay, and the glasses worn by the musician prominently figure on the dust jacket of the novel. The film, naturally, has an abundance of rock in the sound track: the Bangles, the Doors, Jimi Hendrix, David Lee Roth . . . even Roy Orbison. But no Elvis Costello. No poster. No glasses. Perhaps the producers felt safer by leaving him out.

Those who plunked down $4.50 or more to watch the film probably wouldn't mind lining up to execute a few kicks on the responsible parties. However, they may be too numb from the soporific examination of life among the teenage parasites in L.A.

The few book reviewers who didn't sing Ellis' praises through highly amplified, extra bass response, nonreflective speakers pointed out, however timidly, not only that the characters have freeze-dried cerebral cortices but also that the writing style has a certain distanced quality. Turned right side up, that's a nice way of saying shallow. But Ellis' failing is overshadowed by the virtues of his subject: deceit, deception, dirty dealing, drugs, death, disease—and that's only a partial list of a single consonant. Screenwriter Harley Peyton tones down the level of abuse: it's there, but less intense.

Whereas Clay in the novel is more or less another brick in the wall of a Sadean ruin, the porcine-faced Andrew McCarthy gives a bit more life to the part. Clay goes East to college, and when his buddy Julian's recording company, which his daddy bankrolled as a graduation gift, sucks wind, Julian begins to suck coke. When he's not wired, he's sick. Clay's girlfriend, Blair, feels so sorry for Julian that she simply must minister to his "needs" when she isn't being a fashion model. Jami Gertz, who plays Blair, used to be the straitlaced student council president type on *Square Pegs*. Now she looks like she could sliver diamonds with her fingernails. Robert Downey Jr. plays Julian like an Alex Keaton gone bad. Throughout the film, Downey has what appears at various times to be



Maalox, spittle, and a herpes sore on the edge of his mouth. It was either a sloppy makeup person or a statement. I'm afraid it may be the latter, but what it means I can't figure.

Film is more effective than TV is, because in a theater your attention tends to be entirely focused on the image projected onto a screen that is measured in square feet. Sound, especially in auditoriums equipped with Dolby, is all-encompassing. With TV, a minor shift in eye orientation takes you away from the scene, and the audio emerges from a single speaker that could have been stolen from a Philco radio. The movie can absorb the viewer; the viewer is distanced from the glass screen.

The video screen figures prominently in *Less Than Zero*. The intent, no doubt, was to parallel MTV; the effect is far different. There are two main scenes in the movie: Clay's return from the East and the denouement, when Clay saves his friends from themselves: Blair pours a vial of cocaine down a sink; Julian is taken out of a room where he is performing as a homosexual prostitute. In both cases the setting is a party; multiple video screens throb with the digitized images of, among the stainless steel wastes of a postmoral society, the three friends. The effect is cold, distant, sterile. Characters are simply fashions. You are as sorry for these forms as you are for a pair of Guess jeans.

The movie doesn't fail in spite of itself but because of itself. Although Clay, who goes only so far as an occasional cigarette and drink, *seems* to be well-meaning, the seeming isn't very much. It's more a matter of mechanical motions, not deliberate acts. The biggest risk he takes is asking his father for $50K, which is meant to pay off Julian's bill to the heavies. For most of us, the sum is extraordinary, but in *Less Than Zero* it's like bumming a smoke on a visit to the R.J. Reynolds headquarters. For Clay, it is hardly heroic.

Blair's moment of salvation is motivated not by any question about the error of drug abuse but by a fear that continued abuse of her nasal passages will lead to a bloody nose, which is hell on a model's makeup. The death of Julian, seated between his best friends on the butter-soft leather seats of a vintage Corvette, is figured beatifically; but it is less moving than the coyote that was run over earlier in the film.

It's a rare case of a film that is as good as the book.

Gary Vasilash watches movies in Detroit.

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On 'The Bork Confirmation Hearings'

My entry for the Robert Rauschenburg translation contest:
— Testimony of artist Robert Rauschenburg:

> Young, old, rich, and hopeful are united by repulsion that a nouveau changling by his tongue and his unproven change of ideology might entrap decades of innocences.

— My translation:

> Attention, Art World! Did you see me trash Bork? Do you like me, toad that I am? O, I will do anything to please you! Will the invitations come now?

If I win the $100 purse, please donate it to The Rockford Institute in my name.

—John Peterson
Barrington, IL

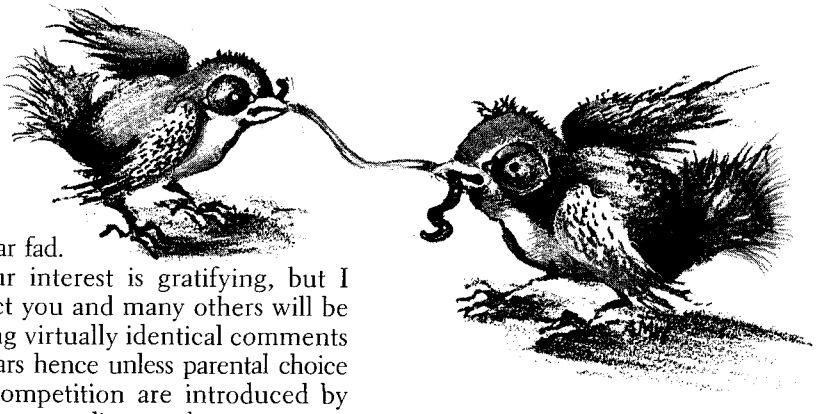
On 'The Children Back in School'

A public schoolteacher the past 17 years, I believe the cost to the nation and its children of turning education over to a protected monopoly is much greater than even conservative editors might realize.

Admittedly, the consolidation trend you deplore is a most deserving target for criticism. You neglect, however, one notably destructive consequence of that trend: huge high schools. Anonymity, formula-processing of students, and alienation are predictable outcomes of putting so many adolescents in one school.

But this is only one example of the quality of decision-making insured by leaving the crucial decisions about schooling to bureaucrats and union-dominated legislatures. The greatest cost of the protected monopoly structure of America's schools is the impossibility of entrepreneurial advances in everything from history instruction to teacher selection.

There is no market to promote what works and reject what does not; hence, good and bad ideas replace each other in cycles. Real innovation has no advantage over the politically motivated popular fad.



Your interest is gratifying, but I predict you and many others will be making virtually identical comments 20 years hence unless parental choice and competition are introduced by tuition tax credits, vouchers, or capitation fees (as in the Thatcher government proposals).

—Tom Shuford
Oyster Bay, NY

On 'Video Stores and Libraries'

I have had a running battle with the liberal outlook of the library profession since my library school days. My orals covered why I thought that libraries did not purchase conservative serials and books. I replied that books are generally reviewed in the liberal media, and the few conservative publications that review books either review the liberal books to put them down or are not taken by libraries. The reason conservative magazines are not taken is that they are not indexed in *Readers' Guide*, and the reason they are not indexed is that they are not taken by libraries, a vicious circle.

Librarians do not censor, they select — that is, they do not purchase books or remove those that may be offensive to liberal tastes. Nothing liberal is too offensive, but a scholarly book written suggesting that racial differences might exist is offensive, as are books criticizing modern art or evolution.

Nonprint items are growing faster than books — in fact, the other day I found over 30 tapes of a recent book, but only one copy of the book in our system. The retiring of books — that is, burning of many — is truly a horror story. I am afraid that taking money away from libraries will make the problem worse. Those of us that are book people are on the low end of the totem pole and will be the first to go.

—Anonymous

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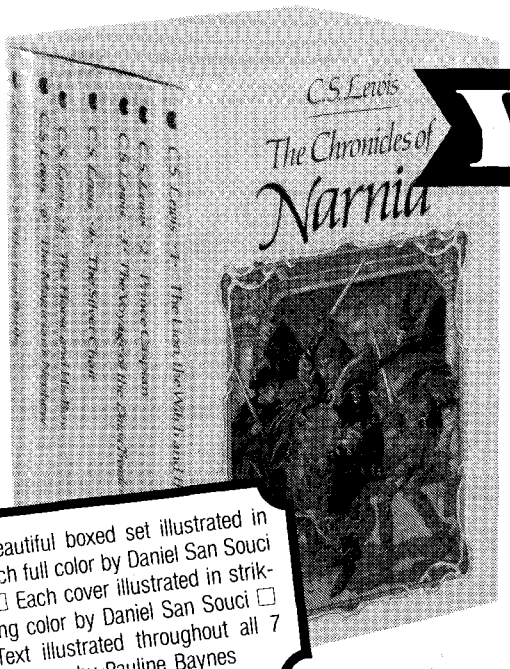

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